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Wm. G. Harris
from her friend
H. T. Hopkinson
3^d 1852.



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THE
FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

IN FOUR BOOKS.

BY THOMAS À KEMPIS.

A New Translation from the Original Latin.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS

AND A PRAYER AT THE END OF EACH CHAPTER.

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THE
FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

Book First.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE IMITATION OF CHRIST, AND THE CONTEMPT
OF ALL THE VANITIES OF THE WORLD.

1. HE that followeth Me, walketh not
in darkness, saith the Lord.

These are the words of Christ, whereby
we are admonished how we must imitate
His life and conversation, if we would be
truly enlightened and delivered from all
blindness of heart.

Let it, then, be our chief study to med-
itate on the life of Jesus Christ.

2. The teaching of Christ surpasseth all
the teachings of the Saints; and he that
hath His Spirit, will find therein a hidden
manna.

But it happeneth that many, from the frequent hearing of the Gospel, feel little emotion; because they have not the Spirit of Christ.

But he that would fully and with relish understand the words of Christ, must study to conform his whole life to Him.

3. What doth it profit thee to dispute deeply about the Trinity, if thou be wanting in humility, and so be displeasing to the Trinity?

In truth, sublime words make not a saint and a just man; but it is a virtuous life that maketh one dear to God.

I would rather feel compunction, than know how to define it.

If thou didst know the whole Bible outwardly, and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would it all profit thee without charity and the grace of God?

Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, but to love God and serve Him alone.

This is the highest wisdom, by despising the world, to make progress towards the kingdom of heaven.

4. It is vanity, therefore, to seek perishing riches, and to trust in them.

Vanity, also, it is, to court honours, and to lift up one's self on high.

Vanity is it to follow the desires of the flesh; and to desire that, for which hereafter there must be a heavy penalty.

Vanity is it to wish a long life, and take but little pains about a good life.

Vanity is it to attend only to the present life, and not to look forward to the things that are to come.

It is vanity to love what is passing away with all speed, and not to be hasting thither where endless joy abideth.

5. Oftentimes call to mind the proverb: The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor is the ear filled with hearing.


Study therefore to wean thy heart from love of visible things, and to betake thee to the things unseen; for they that follow the pleasure of their senses sully conscience, and lose the grace of God.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

IF we would really honour Jesus Christ, we must apply ourselves to know Him, to love Him, and to follow Him in the practice of every Christian virtue. This is absolutely necessary for salvation; as we cannot become true Christians, but by knowing, loving, and following Christ. To pretend to please our Blessed Saviour by a profound knowledge of His divinity, without endeavouring to follow His example, without living as He lived, would be most dangerously to delude ourselves.

PRAYER.

WHAT will it avail me, O Jesus, to study and to know in part Thy supreme greatness, and the most sublime of Thy mysteries, if I endeavour not to derive advantage and merit from them, by cherishing Thy dispositions and copying Thy virtues, since, to save my soul, I must not only know, but practise what Thou hast taught me by Thy word, and manifested in Thy life for my imitation—I must know and practise my religion? This, my Saviour, is the grace which I now ask of Thee, with a firm hope that Thou wilt grant my petition. Amen.



CHAPTER II.

OF HAVING A HUMBLE OPINION OF ONESELF.

EVERY man naturally desireth to know; but what doth knowledge avail without the fear of God?

Truly, a lowly rustic that serveth God is better than a proud philosopher who pondereth the courses of the stars, and neglecteth himself.

He that knoweth himself, becometh vile to himself, and taketh no delight in the praises of men.

If I knew all things that are in the world, and were not in charity, what would it profit me in the sight of God, who will judge according to deeds?

2. Cease from overweening desire of knowledge; because many distractions are found there, and much delusion.

Learned men are very willing to seem wise, and to be called so.

Many are the things which it is of little or no *profit to the soul* to know.

THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

And he is very unwise, who attendeth more earnestly to other things than to those which may serve for his salvation.

Many words do not satisfy the soul ; but a good life giveth ease to the mind, and a pure conscience affordeth great confidence towards God.

3. The more thou knowest, and the better, so much the heavier will thy judgment therefore be, unless thy life be also more holy.

Be not, then, lifted up for any skill or learning thou hast ; but rather fear for the knowledge that is given thee.

If it seem to thee that thou knowest many things, and understandest them well enough ; know for all that, the things thou art ignorant of are still more.

Be not high-minded, but rather acknowledge thine ignorance.

Why wouldst thou prefer thyself to another, when there may be found many more learned and better versed in the Law than thou ?

If thou woulst acquire knowledge and learn any thing to the purpose, love to be unknown, and to be esteemed as nothing.

4. The highest and most useful lesson we can learn is this, to know truly and to look down upon ourselves.

To think nothing of ourselves, and always to judge well and highly of others, is great wisdom and high perfection.

If thou shouldst see another openly do wrong, or commit some grievous sins, thou needest not think thyself better; for thou knowest not how long thou mayest be able to persevere in well-doing.

We are all frail; but see thou think none more frail than thyself.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

THE thoughts of man, says the Scripture, are vain and useless, if, in them, he does not apply his mind to know and to love God, to forget and to hate himself. The simple and lively faith of a soul which believes all that God teaches, without examination or hesitation, and performs all that He requires for the attainment of salvation, is preferable to all divine and human sciences, *which, of themselves, without such a faith, only*

fill the mind with pride, leave the heart dry, and avail naught for salvation.

PRAYER.

MODERATE, O Jesus, my eagerness to know so much, and correct my negligence in doing so little for salvation; since Thou wilt not judge me according to what I have known, but by what I have done, or neglected to do, to obtain it. Can I apply my thoughts to know Thee thoroughly, and not admire and love Thee? and can I truly know myself, and not despise and hate myself? O life unknown! life hidden in Jesus Christ, in God! what an excellent means art thou of sanctification and salvation; yet how little art thou practised amongst Christians! Grant, O Lord, that all may know, esteem, and love it, and be directed by it. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE DOCTRINE OF TRUTH.

HAPPY is he whom truth teacheth by itself, not by figures and passing sounds, but as it is in itself.

Our own way of thinking and our sense *often deceive us*, and see but a little way.

What signifies making a great dispute about hidden and obscure things which we shall not be reprov'd in the Judgment for having been ignorant of?

Wonderful folly! that, neglecting the things that are useful and necessary, we give our attention unbidden to such as are curious and mischievous! Having eyes, we see not.

2. And what matter is it to us of *genera* and *species*? He to whom the Eternal Word speaketh is delivered from a multitude of opinions.

From the One Word are all things, and all things speak this One; and this is the Beginning which also speaketh to us.

Without Him no man understandeth, or rightly judgeth.

He to whom all things are one, who referreth all things to one, and seeth all things in one, may be steadfast in heart, and abide in God at peace.

O Truth! my God! make me one with Thee in everlasting charity.

I am oftentimes wearied with the many

things I read and hear: in Thee is all I wish or long for.

Let all teachers hold their peace, and all created things keep silence in Thy presence; do Thou alone speak to me.

3. The more a man is united within himself, and interiorly simple, so much the more and deeper things doth he understand without labour; for he receiveth the light of understanding from on high.

A pure, simple, and steadfast spirit is not distracted by the multitude of things he hath to do; for he doeth all for the honour of God, and striveth within himself to be free from all self-seeking.

Who doth more hinder thee, and give thee more trouble, than thine own heart's unmortified affection?

A good and devout man first arrangeth interiorly the works he hath to do exteriorly; and they lead him not to the desires of an evil inclination, but he bendeth them to the judgment of right reason.

Who hath a stronger conflict than he that striveth to overcome himself?

And this ought to be our business; namely, to overcome self; and every day to get more the mastery over self; and to make progress for the better.

4. All perfection in this life is attended by some imperfection, and all our far-seeing is not without a certain obscurity.

The humble knowledge of oneself is a surer way to God than deep researches after science.

Knowledge is not to be blamed, nor simple acquaintance with things, good in itself and ordained by God; but a good conscience and a virtuous life are always to be preferred.

But because many take more pains to be learned than to lead good lives,* therefore they often go astray, and bear no fruit at all, or but little.

5. Oh, if men would be as diligent in the rooting out of vices and grafting in of virtues as they are in mooted questions, there would not be so many evils and scandals among the people, nor such laxity in *monasteries*.

Truly, when the day of judgment cometh, it will not be asked of us, what we have read, but what we have done ; not what fine discourses we have made, but how like religious we have lived.

Tell me where now are all those doctors and masters with whom thou wast well acquainted while they were yet alive and in the glory of their learning ?

Others now hold their preferments, as I know not whether they ever think of them.

In their lifetime they seemed to be something, and now they are not spoken of.

6. Oh, how quickly passeth away the glory of the world ! Oh, that their lives had been in keeping with their learning ! Then would they have studied and lectured to good purpose.

How many who take little care in serving God are ruined through vain learning in the world.

And because they love rather to be great than humble, therefore they are lost their own imaginings.

He is truly great who hath great charity.

He is truly great who is little in his own eyes, and counteth for nothing all the heights of honour.

He is truly prudent who esteemeth all earthly things as dung, that he may win Christ.

And he is truly most learned, who doth the will of God, and forsaketh his own will.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

To study the truths of religion, not so much to know as to practise them ; to listen to the Divine Word, which speaks more to the heart than to the understanding ; to know and to do what is necessary for salvation, is the true science of a Christian. I am weary of speculative knowledge, which does not change nor move my heart, but only flatters the curiosity of my mind ; I am tired of knowing and saying so much concerning eternal truths and salvation, and yet doing so little to obtain it.

PRAYER.

O JESUS ! who hast taught us that not all *those who say Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but only such as do the will of Thy Father, whose lives correspond with their*

belief; grant us a truly Christian spirit, a Christian heart, and guide us in the paths of a Christian life. Grant that I may become detached from all things, and in all things seek Thee alone. Grant that I may direct all my knowledge, my whole capacity, all my happiness, and all my exertions, to please Thee, to love Thee, and to obtain Thy love for time and eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

OF PRUDENCE IN WHAT WE DO.

WE must not trust every word or impulse, but cautiously and patiently weigh the matter according to God.

Alas! oftentimes is evil more readily believed and spoken of another than good; so weak are we.

But perfect men do not easily believe every tale-teller, for they know human weakness is prone to evil, and very apt to slip in speech.

2. *It is great wisdom not to be rash in what is to be done, and not to persist obstinately in our own opinions.*

It is a part of this wisdom also, not to believe every thing men say, nor straight-way to pour into the ears of others what we have heard or believed.

Take counsel of a wise and conscientious man, and seek rather to be instructed by one that is better, than to follow thy own inventions.

A good life maketh a man wise according to God, and giveth great experience.

The more humble any one is in heart, and the more in subjection to God, so much the wiser will he be in all things, and the more at peace.

PRÁCTICAL REFLECTIONS.

NOTHING is more opposite to charity, or more fatal to salvation, than the evil reports we make of one another, whether they be true or false; because they irritate the mind, disorder the heart, foment divisions, and imbitter hatreds, and because we cannot obtain God's pardon for them, unless we resolve, in our confessions, to repair *the evil we have done*, and to reconcile those we *may have set at variance*. We should therefore *neither spread evil reports of others, nor listen*

to them ; and if we do hear any thing against our neighbour, we should be careful not to repeat it.

PRAYER.

GRANT, O my Saviour, that I may observe, with the greatest care, Thy precept of charity towards my neighbour, to love him as Thou hast loved us, since this is absolutely necessary for salvation. Give me also that tenderness of charity which may prevent me from wounding it in any way ; for Thou hast said that to offend our neighbour is to wound the apple of Thine eye. Grant, therefore, that I may avoid Thy displeasure by not incurring the displeasure of my neighbour Amen.

CHAPTER V.

OF READING THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

TRUTH is to be sought in the holy Scriptures, not eloquence.

All holy Scripture should be read in the spirit in which it was written.

We should seek profit in the Scriptures rather than subtlety of speech.

We ought to read devout and simple

•

books as willingly as those that are high and profound.

Let not the authority of the author be in thy way, whether he be of little or great learning; but let love of simple truth lead thee to read.

Inquire not who may have said a thing, but consider what is said.

2. Men pass away, but the truth of the Lord abideth for ever.

God speaketh to us in divers ways, without respect of persons.

Our curiosity is often a hinderance to us in reading the Scriptures, when we wish to understand and to discuss where we ought to pass on in simplicity.

If thou wilt derive profit, read with humility, with simplicity, and with faith; and never wish to have the name of learning.

Be fond of inquiring, and listen in silence to the words of the Saints; and let *not the parables of the ancients be displeasing to thee, for they are not uttered without a cause.*

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

READ the sacred Scriptures and books of piety with the same spirit in which they were written; that is, read them in quest of truth, for instruction, for edification, and to bring thee to a true Christian way of life. Read the holy Scriptures with faith, humility, respect, and docility, paying the Holy Ghost who dictated it, to enable thee to understand it, to relish it, and to prize it.

PRAYER.

SPEAK, my God, speak to my heart and convince it, while the truths which I read strike and convince my mind. Grant that, being instructed in Thy law and in Thy holy will, by the reading of good books, I may follow them in all things that what Thou teachest may ever be the rule of my conduct. Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

OF INORDINATE AFFECTIONS.

WHENEVER a man desireth any thing *ordinately*, straightway he is disquieted *within himself*.

The proud and the covetous are

at rest; the poor and humble in spirit pass their life in abundance of peace.

The man who is not yet perfectly dead to self is soon tempted and overcome in little and paltry things.

He that is weak in spirit, and in a certain manner as yet carnal, and inclined to things of sense, cannot without difficulty sever himself wholly from earthly desires.

And therefore he is often sad when he does withdraw himself; and besides, he is easily moved to anger if any one thwarts him.

2. And, if he have pursued his inclination, forthwith he is burdened with remorse of conscience for having gone after his passion, which helpeth him not at all to the peace he looked for.

It is by resisting the passions therefore, and not by serving them, that true peace of heart is to be found.

Peace therefore is not in the heart of the carnal *man*, nor in the man who is devoted to outward things, but in the fervent and spiritual man.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

THE peace of the soul, next to the grace of God, is the greatest of blessings, and we spare no pains to maintain it within us. But we can neither obtain nor preserve this peace of soul but by resisting our passions and irregular desires; for the more we endeavour to suppress them, the more restless do they make us; the more we fight against them, the less trouble they give us; the more we resist them, the more do they leave us in peace.

PRAYER.

GIVE us, O Lord, this interior peace, this repose of conscience, this tranquillity which increases our confidence in Thy goodness, and makes us faithful in corresponding with it; this peace of God which surpasseth all understanding, which keeps our minds and our hearts in Thy love which Thou alone canst give. Calm the storms and emotions of our passions, by giving us strength to overcome them. Grant that our desires may become submissive to reason, our reason to faith, and the whole man to God. Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

OF AVOIDING VAIN HOPE AND ARROGANCE.

HE is a vain man that putteth his hope in man, or in things created.

Be not ashamed to wait on others for the love of Jesus Christ, and to be looked upon as poor in this world.

Depend not upon thyself, but place thy hope in God.

Do what thou canst, and God will be with thy good will.

Trust not in thine own knowledge, nor in the cunning of any man living, but rather in the grace of God, who helpeth the humble, and humbleth them that presume upon themselves.

2. Glory not in riches, if thou have them, nor in friends, because they are powerful; but in God, who giveth all things, and desireth to give Himself above all things.

Boast not thyself of thy stature or beauty of body, which with a little sickness is spoiled and disfigured.

Be not proud of thy abilities or thy talents, lest thou offend God, to whom appertaineth whatever good thou mayest naturally have.

Esteem not thyself better than others, lest perhaps thou be accounted worse in the sight of God, who knoweth what is in man.

Be not proud of thy own good works; for the judgments of God are other than those of men; and what pleaseth men oftentimes displeaseth him.

If thou have any good in thee, believe still better things of others, that thou mayest preserve humility.

It will do thee no harm to put thyself below every body, but it will hurt thee very much to put thyself before any one.

Continual peace dwelleth with the humble; but in the heart of the proud is frequent envy and indignation.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

DEPEND only upon God, whom nothing can move, on whom alone thou oughtest to rely; for *nothing* is weaker, more uncertain, and more in-

constant than man, who is made up of error, malice, and lies. Hope all things of God, and nothing from thyself, nor from others. Do not glory in thy good works or ability, but in all things, and by all things, give glory to God, to whom alone glory is due.

PRAYER.

As, O Jesus, Thou hatest and despisest those who through a secret self-complacency exalt themselves before Thee; but lovest and honour-est those who attribute nothing to themselves but evil, and refer all good to Thee, impart to us, we beseech Thee, interior humility of heart, which brings us nigh to Thee, and makes us worthy of Thy love; heal the pride and vanity of our high and haughty minds, which remove us to a distance from Thee, and excite Thy hatred against us; and make our hearts humble, submissive, and docile to Thy holy will, that so we may bring down Thy mercies upon us. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF GUARDING AGAINST TOO MUCH INTIMACY.

OPEN not thy heart to every man, but discuss thy business with one that is wise and feareth God.

Be rarely with young people and strangers.

Fawn not upon the rich, and be no fond of appearing in the presence of the great.

Keep company with the humble and the simple, with the devout and well-ordered and converse of such things as are edifying.

Be not an intimate of any woman ; but in general commend all good women unto God.

Desire to be intimate only with God and His holy angels ; and shun the acquaintance of men.

We should have charity towards all men ; but intimacy is not expedient.

It happeneth sometimes that a person while unknown shineth highly in good report ; but whose presence offendeth the eyes of them that see him.

Sometimes we think to please others with our company ; and we begin rather *to be displeasing* to them from the *bad qualities* they discover in us.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

Avoid worldly company, useless conversations, and those overflowings and attachments of the heart which are neither regulated nor governed by the love of God. For all these things dissipate the soul, withdraw it from God, hinder it from being recollected, and deprive it of that interior spirit which is so necessary for salvation; they expose it to many dangers, and insensibly subvert all interior discipline. Let your friends be persons of piety, whose lives are regular and irreproachable, that their good example may withdraw you from sin, and lead you to virtue. Happy the Christian who is attached only to Jesus Christ, to his duties, and to his salvation; who lives in God and for God, and thus commences in time that which shall be his continual occupation for eternity!

PRAYER.

GRANT, O Jesus, I may love Thee more than parents, relations, or friends, more than I love myself. Grant that I may earnestly endeavour to know Thee, to love Thee, and to follow Thee, that so, having been accustomed and conformed to Thee, I may not be exposed, as many Christians are, to the danger of *appearing*, after my departure hence, before a God whom I know not, *whom I have never loved*; for not to love Thee *in time, is not to love thee for eternity*; whereas,

if I endeavour to love Thee now, I shall have reason to hope that I shall love Thee for ever. O most amiable God! O most loving God! grant that I may love Thee with my whole heart, with my whole soul, with all my strength, and with all my mind. Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

OF OBEDIENCE AND SUBJECTION.

It is a very great thing to be settled in obedience, to live under a superior, and not to be one's own master.

It is much safer to be in subjection than in authority.

Many are under obedience, more out of necessity than charity; and such have suffering, and are apt to murmur.

Neither will they acquire liberty of mind, unless they submit themselves with their whole heart for God's sake.

Run hither or thither, thou wilt find no rest but in humble subjection under the *government of a superior.*

A fancy for places and changing of residence hath deluded many.

2. It is true, every one is desirous of acting according to his own way of thinking, and is most inclined to such as agree with him in opinion.

But if God is amongst us, we must needs sometimes give up our own opinion for the blessing of peace.

Who is so wise, as to be able fully to know all things?

Be not over-confident therefore in thine own sentiments, but be ready also with pleasure to hear the sentiments of others.

Although thine own opinion be right, yet if for God's sake thou leavest it and followest another man's, thou wilt profit the more by it.

3. For I have often heard that it is safer to listen and to take advice than to give it.

It may also happen that each one's opinion may be right; but to be unwilling to acquiesce in other men's, when reason

or occasion requires it, is a sign of pride and obstinacy.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

How delightful to depend solely on God in the persons of our superiors, who hold his place; and how very meritorious is the constant practice of obedience, which is a perpetual exercise of abnegation, of self-renunciation, and of the most perfect love of God! Obedience constitutes the excellence, the happiness, and the merit of a Christian and religious life, and makes God the absolute master and proprietor of our hearts.

But for this, our minds, our hearts, and all our actions must combine in the practice of obedience: the mind by approving it, the heart by loving it, and our actions by exercising it promptly, generously, and constantly.

PRAYER.

Is it possible, O my Saviour, to behold Thee sacrifice the independence of a God to obedience, and I not love and practise it? Can I behold Thee, for thirty years, punctually obedient to Thy blessed Mother and St. Joseph, and not endeavour faithfully to observe what Thou ordainest me by Thy inspiration, by my rules, and by my superiors? *How can I listen to the repugnance and difficulty which I experience in obedience, when I behold Thee obedient even to the very execu-*

tioners who nailed thee to the cross! Grant, O Jesus, that, in imitation of Thee, I may subject myself to obedience, and thus evince my desire of pleasing Thee, and of doing in all things, and at all times, Thy holy will. Amen.

CHAPTER X.

OF AVOIDING SUPERFLUITY OF WORDS.

FLY as much as possible the tumult of men; for the treating of worldly affairs is a great hinderance, even though they be discoursed of with a simple intention. For we are too easily contaminated and ensnared with vanity.

I would that many a time I had kept silence, and not been in company.

Why are we so fond of speaking and of talking idly together, when yet we seldom return to silence without some wound to conscience?

The reason why we are so fond of talking is, that we seek consolation from one another by much discoursing together

and we wish to lighten our heart, wearied with various thoughts.

And we are very fond of speaking and thinking of those things we very much love or wish for, or that we feel are a contradiction to us.

2. But, alas, it is often vainly and to no purpose ; for this outward consolation is no small hinderance to the interior and divine consolation.

Therefore we must watch and pray, lest the time pass away without fruit.

If thou hast leave to speak, and it is expedient, speak those things that may edify.

Evil custom and negligence about our spiritual advancement, contribute much to the unguardedness of our tongue.

But devout conferences upon spiritual things are no small help to spiritual progress ; especially where persons of congenial mind and spirit are associated together in God.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

"WATCH and pray" is the simple means which Jesus Christ prescribes to enable a Christian to resist temptation, to avoid sin and secure his salvation. To speak little to creatures and much to God, to renounce useless and curious conversations, to speak only what is good or necessary, is an excellent method of becoming an interior man, of preserving purity of heart and peace of conscience, and of becoming entirely united to God. A soul which gives itself through the senses to creatures, and lives not an interior life, but amuses itself with trifles, is not at all in a state to relish the things of God, or to apply to prayer or recollection, which are so useful and so necessary for salvation. Why, says St. Austin, why dost thou, O dissipated and wandering soul, seek content in created objects, in the goods and pleasures of life? Seek within thyself, by recollection, the only true and sovereign good who is there, and who alone can satisfy thy desires.

PRAYER.

GIVE me, O God, that spirit of interior recollection which will make me attentive to Thy holy will and faithful to Thy graces. Grant that the remembrance of Thy awful presence may remind me continually of Thy blessed life and conversation, and effectually control me during

my earthly pilgrimage. I am weary, O God, of living an exile from Thy presence, and of being so little affected by the consideration of Thy majesty as to do nothing to please Thee. What can I find in heaven or on earth that is comparable to Thee! Thou art the God of my heart; grant I may be ever sensible of Thy presence, and desire only the happiness of pleasing Thee, in time, that Thou mayest be my portion for eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER XI.

OF ACQUIRING PEACE AND ZEAL FOR OUR SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

WE might have much peace, if we would not busy ourselves with the sayings and doings of other people, and with things which concern us not.

How can he long abide in peace who entangleth himself with other people's concerns; who seeketh occasions abroad; who little or seldom recollecteth himself *interiorly*?

Blessed are the single-hearted, for they shall enjoy much peace.

2. What is the reason why some of the Saints were so perfect and contemplative?

Because their whole study was to mortify themselves wholly from all earthly desires; and so they were able to cleave to God with all their inmost heart, and freely to attend to themselves.

But we are too much taken up with our own passions, and too solicitous about transitory things.

Seldom do we perfectly overcome one single fault; nor do we ardently desire to make daily progress; therefore we remain cold and lukewarm.

3. If we were perfectly dead to ourselves, and no way involved in earthly pursuits, then we could taste the savour of divine things, and experience something of heavenly contemplation.

The whole hinderance, and a very great one, is, that we are not free from passions *and lusts, and strive not to walk in the perfect way of the Saints.*

When we are met by even a little

adversity, we are too soon cast down, and seek after human consolation.

4. If we strove like valiant men to stand in the battle, verily we should see the Lord from heaven assisting us.

For He is ready to help them that fight trusting in His grace; who Himself provideth us occasions to fight, in order that we may overcome.

If we place our religious progress in outward observances only, our devotion will soon come to an end.

But let us lay the axe to the root, that being purged of passions, we may possess our minds in peace.

5. If every year we rooted out one fault, we should soon become perfect men.

But now we often feel, on the contrary that we may find ourselves to have been better and more pure in the beginning of our conversion, than after many years of *our profession*.

Our fervour and progress ought to increase daily; but now it is esteemed

great thing if any one can retain something of his first fervour.

If we would do ourselves a little violence in the beginning, afterwards we should be able to do all things with ease and joy.

6. It is hard to give up what we are accustomed to, but harder to go contrary to our own will.

But if thou overcome not little and easy things, how wilt thou surmount greater difficulties?

Resist thine inclination in the beginning, and break off evil habits; lest, by little and little, the difficulty increase upon thee.

Oh, if thou didst consider what peace thou wouldst procure for thyself, and what joy for others, by well-doing, I think thou wouldst be more solicitous for thy spiritual progress.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

As nothing is more opposite to true peace, to the happiness and comfort of this life, and to an assured hope of salvation hereafter, than to

abandon ourselves to our passions, and submit to be their slaves and victims, so nothing is more capable of establishing within us true repose of conscience, and of obtaining merit and happiness in this life, and eternal salvation in the next, than ever to resist and conquer our evil inclinations, and to refuse our hearts, on all occasions, the gratification of their irregular desires. Endeavour, therefore, seriously to die to thyself, to overcome thy repugnance to do good, to subdue the ardour of thy desires, and to renounce thy own will in all things, for this alone will make thee happy in time and eternity. There is no true peace of conscience, nor hope of future reward, but in doing all for God, and in opposition to thyself.

PRAYER.

How happy should I be, my Saviour, how content and how sure of salvation, did I but strive as much to satisfy Thy justice by penance, and Thy love by fidelity, as I do to satisfy my passions and the demands of self-love! Suffer me not, O Lord, to serve any other master than Thee. Break my chains asunder, deliver me from the unjust and cruel servitude of my passions. My heart is made for Thee. Permit not vanity, *self-love, sensuality, idleness, and anger, like strange gods, to divide it, or rather rob it, of the empire of Thy love.* Not to give thee my whole

heart, is to withdraw it from Thee, who wilt have all or none. O my God and my all! O God of my heart! be Thou my portion for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE ADVANTAGE OF ADVERSITY.

It is good for us now and then to have some troubles and adversities; for oftentimes they make a man enter into himself, that he may know that he is an exile, and place not his hopes in any thing of the world.

It is good for us sometimes to suffer contradictions, and to allow people to think ill and slightingly of us, even when we do and mean well.

These are often helps to humility, and rid us of vain-glory.

For then we more earnestly seek God to be witness of what passes within us, when outwardly we are slighted by men, and incur their discredit.

2 Therefore ought a man so firmly to

establish himself in God, as to have no need of seeking many human consolations.

When a man of good will is troubled, tempted, or afflicted with evil thoughts, then he best understandeth what need he hath of God, and that without Him he is incapable of any good.

Then also is he sorrowful; he sigheth and prayeth by reason of the miseries he suffereth.

Then is he weary of longer life; and wisheth death to come, that he may be dissolved, and be with Christ.

Then also he well perceiveth, that perfect security and full peace cannot be realized in this world.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

We should regard contradictions as the trials by which God would prove and purify our charity. If all persons had the consideration and regard for us which our self-love deserves, we should induce us to believe we for our neighbour, subject to the caprices, a species of gratitude purely human, a secret complacency in ourselves.

would have us every where meet with and suffer contradictions, disappointments, and opposition to our designs, from those with whom we live, that so we may love them solely for His sake, and because He so ordained. Happy the soul which tribulation tries, and temptation purifies, as gold is tried and purified in the fire! It thus becomes worthy of acceptance with God, for it is after God's own heart.

PRAYER.

SUPPORT me, O Lord, under all the troubles and contradictions which Thou permittest to befall me and willest I should suffer: that they may not weaken my charity for my neighbour, nor my fidelity towards Thee. Grant that temptations, far from separating me from Thee, may unite me more closely to Thee, by obliging me to experience a continual and pressing need of Thy powerful assistance. Amen.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF RESISTING TEMPTATIONS.

As long as we live in this world, we cannot be without tribulation and temptation.

Hence it is written in Job, "Man's life on earth is a temptation."

Every one, therefore, should be solicitous about his temptations, and watch in prayer, lest the devil find opportunity to catch him; who never sleepeth, but goeth about, seeking whom he may devour.

No one is so perfect and holy, as not sometimes to have temptations; and we never can be wholly free from them.

2. Nevertheless, temptations are often very profitable to a man, troublesome and grievous though they be; for in them a man is humbled, purified, and instructed.

All the Saints passed through many tribulations and temptations, and profited by them.

And they that could not support temptations, became reprobate, and fell away.

There is no order so holy, nor place so retired, where there are not temptations or adversities.

3. A man is never wholly secure from temptation as long as he liveth; for ther

is within us the source of temptation; since we were born in concupiscence.

When one temptation or tribulation is over, another cometh on; and we shall always have something to suffer; for we have lost the advantage of our original happiness.

Many seek to fly temptations, and fall the more grievously into them.

We cannot conquer by flight alone; but by patience and true humility we become stronger than all our enemies.

4. He who only declineth them outwardly, and doth not pluck out their root, will profit little; nay, temptations will the sooner return, and he will find himself in a worse condition.

By degrees and by patience, with longanimity, thou wilt, by God's grace, better overcome them than by harshness and thine own importunity.

Take counsel the oftener in temptation, and do not deal *harshly* with one who is *tempted*; but *pour in consolation*, as thou *wouldst wish to be done unto thyself*.

5. Inconstancy of mind, and little confidence in God, is the beginning of all evil temptations.

For as a ship without a helm is driven to and fro by the waves, so the man who is negligent, and giveth up his resolution, is tempted in various ways.

Fire trieth iron, and temptation a just man.

We often know not what we are able to do, but temptation discovereth what we are.

Still we must watch, especially in the beginning of temptation; for then the enemy is more easily overcome, if he be not suffered to enter the door of the mind, but is withstood upon the threshold the very moment that he knocketh.

Whence a certain one hath said :

“Resist beginnings; all too late the cure,
When ills have gathered strength by long delay.”

For first there cometh into the mind a simple thought; then a strong imagination; afterwards delight, and the evil motion and consent.

And so, by little and little, the malignant foe doth gain full entrance, when he is not resisted in the beginning.

And the longer any one hath been slothful in resisting, so much the weaker he daily becometh in himself, and the enemy so much the stronger against him.

6. Some suffer grievous temptations in the beginning of their conversion, others in the end; and some are much troubled nearly their whole life.

Some are very lightly tempted, according to the wisdom and equity of the ordinance of God, who weigheth man's condition and merits, and pre-ordaineth all things for the salvation of His elect.

7. We must not, therefore, despair when we are tempted, but the more fervently pray God to vouchsafe to help us in every tribulation; who of a truth, according to the saying of St. Paul, will make such issue with the temptation, that we may be able to sustain it.

Let us, then, humble our souls under the hand of God in every temptation and

tribulation ; for the humble in spirit He will save and exalt.

8. In temptations and tribulations is it proved what progress a man hath made ; and there also is there greater merit, and virtue is made more manifest.

Neither is it a great thing for a man to be devout and fervent while he feeleth no weight of adversity in time of trouble ; but if he suffereth patiently, there will be hope of great profit.

Some are preserved from great temptations, and are often overcome in daily little ones ; that, thus humbled, they may never presume upon themselves in great trials, when they are so weak in such trifling occurrences.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

TEMPTATIONS serve to free us from all lurking inclinations to vanity or self-love, and from at all depending upon ourselves ; because they make us feel the weight of our own miseries, give us a *disgust* for all earthly gratifications, and oblige us to rely solely upon God. They serve also to *humble us* by the experience they afford us of

our own weakness, and of the depth of our natural corruption. They serve, in a word, to convince us of our inability to do the least good, or to avoid the smallest sin, without the assistance of God.

PRAYER.

I AM sensible, O Jesus, that in the time of temptation, of myself, I cannot but offend Thee, and that, carried along by my natural inclination for evil, I am in danger of ruining myself. But I know, also, that Thou canst, and Thy apostle assures me Thou wilt, defend me against the most violent assaults of my passions. Wherefore, mistrusting myself, and relying upon Thee, I will exclaim, *“Lord, save me, or I perish;”* I will stretch out my hand to Thee as St. Peter did, and confidently hope that Thou wilt not let me perish. Amen.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF AVOIDING RASH JUDGMENT.

TURN thine eyes back upon thyself, and see thou *judge not the doings of others.*

In judging others a man toileth in vain; for the most part he is mistaken, and he

easily sinneth; but in judging and scrutinizing himself, he always laboureth with profit.

We often judge of a thing according as we have it at heart; for true judgment is easily lost through private affection.

If God were always the only object of our desire, we should not be so easily disturbed at our own opinions being resisted.

2. But oftentimes there is something lying hid within, or occurring from without, that draws us along with it.

Many secretly seek themselves in what they do, and are not aware of it.

They seem also to continue in good peace, so long as things are done according to their will and judgment; but if aught happen otherwise than they desire, they are soon disturbed, and become sad.

Too often difference of feelings and opinions giveth rise to dissensions between friends and fellow-citizens, between religious and devout persons.

3. An inveterate habit is with difficulty

relinquished, and no one is willingly led beyond his own views.

If thou reliest more on thine own reason or industry than on the subduing virtue of Jesus Christ, thou wilt seldom and with difficulty become an enlightened man.

For God willeth us to become perfectly subject to Himself, and by the love that burneth in us to transcend all reason.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

WE frequently allow ourselves to be biased in our judgments by the inclinations of the heart, instead of being guided by the light of the understanding. Through self-love we ordinarily approve in ourselves what in others we frequently condemn ; and are as much alive to the defects of our neighbour as we are blind to our own. A soul recollected in the presence of God, and faithful to the motions of His grace, being thus engaged with God, and united to Him, is solely occupied with God in itself and itself in God ; and, endeavouring to keep a strict guard over its own heart, it forgives nothing in itself, and every thing in others.

PRAYER.

O MY God ! when shall I be so free from all attachment to creatures, and from all self-seek-

ing, as to keep my mind and my heart solely upon Thee, attentive to my duties and to securing my salvation. Grant, O Jesus, I may forget, or be wholly ignorant of every thing which I ought neither to know nor observe; and thus live only for Thee, with Thee, and in Thee. Vanities, pleasures, news, amusements, and curiosities, how little, or how really nothing are ye, to a soul for whom its God is its all! Suffer me not, O my Saviour, to seek, to know, to love, or to possess any thing but Thee, who art more to me than all things else. Inflammé my heart with an ardent desire of pleasing Thee, and an humble acquiescence in all things to Thy good pleasure. Amen.

CHAPTER XV.

OF WORKS DONE OUT OF CHARITY.

EVIL ought not to be done for any thing in the world, nor for the love of any human being; but yet for the benefit of one that is in need, a good work is sometimes freely to be left undone, or rather *to be changed* for what is better.

For by this means a good work is not lost, but changed into a better.

Without charity, the outward work profiteth nothing; but whatever is done out of charity, be it ever so little and contemptible, it is all made fruitful; inasmuch as God regardeth more out of how much love a man doth a work, than how much he doth.

2. He doth much who loveth much.

He doth much who doth well what he hath to do.

He doth well, who regardeth rather the common good than his own will.

Oftentimes that seemeth to be charity which is rather carnality; for natural inclination, self-will, hope of reward, study of our own interest, will seldom be absent.

3. He that hath true and perfect charity seeketh himself in nothing, but only desireth God to be glorified in all things.

And he envieth no man, for he loveth no joy for himself alone.

Neither doth he desire to rejoice in him-

self, but wisheth to find his blessedness above all good things in God.

He attributeth nothing of good to any man, but referreth it all to God, from whom, as from their fountain, all things proceed, and in whom, as in their end, all the Saints repose in fruition.

Oh, if one had but a spark of real charity, truly would he feel that all earthly things are full of vanity!

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

WE cannot dwell too much upon these words of the author, "God regards more with how much love and affection a person performs a work than how much he does; and he does much who loves much;" that is, our actions are really pleasing to God, only in proportion as they are influenced by a desire of pleasing Him, and, as it were, stamped with the seal of His love. Whatsoever you do, says St. Paul, do all for the honour and glory of God. It is a lively, active, and often renewed love which constitutes the merit of our good actions; faith itself becomes weak and languishing, if not animated by charity and by a pious and affectionate tendency towards the Author of those truths which it unfolds to us.

Let us, therefore, endeavour to love God in

we do, and to do all for the love of Him. All for Thee, O Jesus, all with Thee, all in Thee! Behold, my soul, what thou shouldst say and do incessantly, in order to lead a supernatural and meritorious life, and to commence in time what thou hopest to continue throughout eternity.

PRAYER.

How wearied am I, O my God, with being so often forgetful of Thy presence, and devoid of Thy love! What confusion for me to think so little of a God whose thoughts are always upon me, and to be so frequently indifferent about Thee, my Jesus, who art ever burning with the love of me! Suffer me not to live one moment without loving Thee; and as Thou art the centre of my heart, inflame me with such a continual affection for Thee, such a lively and ardent desire of pleasing Thee and of seeking Thee in and before all things, that I may find no repose, nor true happiness but in Thee. Amen.

CHAPTER XVI.

OF BEARING THE DEFECTS OF OTHERS.

WHATEVER a man cannot amend in himself or in others, he ought to bear wth patiently, until God ordain it otherwi

Reflect that perhaps it is better so to prove thee and thy patience, without which our merits are little worth.

Nevertheless, it behooveth thee to make supplication under such hinderances, that God would vouchsafe to come and help thee, and that thou mayst be able to bear them in good part.

2. If any one once or twice admonished doth not comply, contend not with him; but leave it all to God, that His will may be done, who knoweth how to turn evil into good, and that He may be honoured in all His servants.

Study to be patient in bearing the defects of others, and their infirmities, be they what they may; for thou hast many things, which others must bear withal.

If thou canst not make thyself what thou wouldst be, how canst thou expect to have another so exactly to thy mind?

We would fain see others perfect, and *yet our own faults we amend not.*

3. *We would have others strictly cor-*

rected, and we will not be corrected ourselves.

The large liberty others take displeaseth us, and yet we ourselves will not be denied any thing we ask for.

We wish others to be kept within the rules, and we ourselves will not bear to be checked ever so little.

And so it is clear how seldom we weigh our neighbour in the same balance with ourselves.

If all were perfect, what then should we have to bear with from others for the love of God?

4. But now God hath thus ordered it, that we may learn to bear one another's burdens; for no one is without a fault, no one but hath a burden; no one is sufficient for himself, no one is wise enough for himself: but we have to support one another, comfort one another, help, instruct, and admonish one another.

But the *measure of each man's virtue is best seen in occasions that are adverse. For the occasions do not make the*

frailty of a man, but they shew what he is.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

How excellent a means of sanctifying us and of fitting us for heaven, is the exercise of that charity by which we support in ourselves and in others those weaknesses which we cannot correct! For nothing can humble and confound us before God more than a sense of our own miseries; and nothing can be more just than that we should bear in others, those things which we would have them support in ourselves. We should, therefore, bear with the tempers of others, and endeavour to give no cause of uneasiness to any one on account of our own. It is thus, according to St. Paul, we shall carry one another's burdens, and fulfil the law of Jesus Christ, which is a law of charity, meekness, and patience.

PRAYER.

How true it is, O Lord, that contradictions are most advantageous to a Christian who endeavours to support them with patience and resignation! for they prove and purify his virtue and bring it to perfection. But Thou knowest what difficulty we experience in supporting these trials, and how sensible we are to every thing that opposes our desires. Permit us not, O God, to yield to our *feelings*; but grant we may sacrifice them for *the happiness* of pleasing Thee; since to fee

much, and not to follow the bent of our feelings, to keep silence when the heart is moved, and to withhold ourselves when we are all but overcome, is the most essential practice, and the surest mark for that truly Christian virtue which is to gain for us eternal happiness. This, O Jesus, we hope to obtain from Thy infinite bounty. Amen.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF THE MONASTIC LIFE.

THOU must learn to beat down self in many things, if thou wouldst live in peace and concord with others.

It is no small thing to dwell in monasteries, or in a congregation, and to live there without complaint, and to persevere faithfully even unto death.

Blessed is he who shall have lived there well, and there happily ended.

If thou wouldst persevere dutifully and advance, look on *thyself as an exile and a pilgrim upon earth.*

Thou must become a fool for Christ's

sake, if thou wishest to lead the life of a religious.

2. The habit and the tonsure make but little alteration; but the moral change, and the entire mortification of the passions, make a true religious.

He that seeketh any thing else but simply God, and the salvation of his soul, will find nothing but trouble and sorrow.

And he who doth not strive to be the least, and subject to all, cannot long remain in peace.

3. Thou hast come to serve, not to govern; know thy vocation is to suffer and to labour, not to pass thy time in idleness or vain conversation.

Here, therefore, men are tried, as gold is in the furnace.

Here no man can abide, except he be ready with all his heart to humble himself for the love of God.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

In order to live happily and contented in a community or religious house, and to labour effectually for the attainment of perfection and salva-

tion, we must endure much, and restrain and conquer ourselves upon many occasions. As the dispositions of those with whom we live are often contrary to our own, grace must preserve peace and charity, by enabling us to suffer and to bear with a contrariety of tempers, as nature preserves the order of the universe by reconciling a contrariety of elements. We shall never find true repose of conscience, nor acquire an assured hope of salvation, but by the practice of interior mortification and true humility of heart, by which we bear all things, and refuse the soul its desires.

PRAYER.

As Thou hast commanded me, O Jesus, to seek peace, and to keep it with all men, and as I cannot enjoy this advantage but by humbly bearing with others, and by giving them no cause of uneasiness on my own account, command in this respect what Thou pleasest, and give me what Thou commandest; for how can I bring the pride and haughtiness of my mind to bear and accept willingly the repulses, contempt, and humiliations which so frequently befall me, if Thou assist me not, O Lord, with the all-powerful aid of Thy grace? And how shall I stifle the feelings and sallies of my heart under contradictions, if Thou arrest them not? Grant therefore, O God, that on occasions of repulses

or contradictions, influenced by the respect that is due to Thy holy presence, and by the submission which I ought to render to Thy blessed will, I may calm all troubles within me, and bring all to give place to Thy love. Amen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF THE EXAMPLES OF THE HOLY FATHERS.

Look upon the lively examples of the holy Fathers, in whom shone real perfection and the religious life, and thou wilt see how little it is, and almost nothing, that we do.

Alas, what is our life, if it be compared with theirs!

Saints, and friends of Christ, they served our Lord in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, labour and weariness, in watchings and fastings, in prayer and holy meditations, in frequent persecutions and reproaches.

2. Oh, how many and grievous tribulations did the Apostles suffer, and the

Martyrs, and Confessors, and Virgins, and all the rest who resolved to follow the steps of Christ !

For they hated their lives in this world, that they might keep them unto life eternal.

Oh, what a strict and self-renouncing life the holy Fathers of the desert led ! what long and grievous temptations did they bear ! how often were they harassed by the enemy ! what frequent and fervent prayers offered they up to God ! what rigorous abstinence did they practice ! what great zeal and fervour had they for spiritual progress ! what a valiant contest waged they to subdue their imperfections ! what purity and straightforwardness of purpose kept they towards God !

By day they laboured, and much of the night they spent in prayer ; though while they laboured, they were far from leaving off mental prayer.

3. They spent all *their time* profitably : *every hour seemed short to spend with God ; and even their necessary bodily re-*

fection was forgotten in the great sweetness of contemplation.

They renounced all riches, dignities, honours, friends, and kindred ; they hardly took what was necessary for life : it grieved them to serve the body even in its necessity.

Accordingly, they were poor in earthly things, but very rich in grace and virtues.

Outwardly they suffered want, but within they were refreshed with grace and divine consolation.

4. They were aliens to the world, but they were very near and familiar friends of God.

To themselves they seemed as nothing, and the world despised them ; but they were precious and beloved in the eyes of God.

They persevered in true humility, they lived in simple obedience, they walked in charity and patience ; and so every day they advanced in spirit, and gained great *favour with God*.

They were given for an example to all

religious; and ought more to excite us to advance in good, than the number of the lukewarm induce us to grow remiss.

5. Oh, how great was the fervour of all religious in the beginning of their holy institute!

Oh, how great was their devotion in prayer! how great their zeal for virtue! how vigorous the discipline that was kept up! what reverence and obedience, under the rule of the superior, flourished in all!

Their traces that remain still bear witness, that they were truly holy and perfect men who did battle so stoutly, and trampled the world under their feet.

Now he is thought great who is not a transgressor; and who can with patience endure what he hath undertaken.

6. Ah, the lukewarmness and negligence of our state! that we so soon fall away from our first fervour, and are even now tired of life from slothfulness and tepidity.

Oh, that advancement in virtue be not *quite asleep in thee, who has so often seen the manifold examples of the devout!*

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

Nothing can so powerfully excite us to live holily as the example of those who are holy. Example convinces us of the possibility of virtue, makes it practicable and easy, and offers it to us already illustrated in others, and, as it were, prepared for our exercise. For, when we read the lives or witness the examples of the Saints, we naturally say to ourselves: See what men like ourselves have done, and suffered, and forsaken, for the kingdom of heaven, which is equally the object of our hopes. But what have we done to obtain it? Why do we not exert ourselves as they did to become worthy of the same recompense? Alas! I have reason to apprehend that when I shall appear before God, He will compare my life with my faith, with my religion, and with the examples of holy men who have lived in the same state of life as myself, and confronting me with these witnesses, will say to me: See what thou shouldst have done, and how thou hast neglected it; judge thou thyself; what dost thou deserve?

PRAYER.

ENTER not, O Lord, into judgment with Thy servant; for my life, when compared with the conduct of the Saints, can never justify me. *Grant me the grace which Thou, my Saviour, didst merit for me, of attending to the discharge*

of my duties, of entering into the spirit of religion, of observing its rules and maxims, and of conforming my life to my faith, that so, when I appear before Thee, I may be clothed in the robes of Thy justice, supported by Thy mercy, and animated with Thy love. Amen.

CHAPTER XIX.



OF THE EXERCISES OF A GOOD RELIGIOUS.

THE life of a good religious ought to abound in every virtue; that he may be such inwardly as he seemeth to men outwardly to be.

And with good reason ought he to be much more within than he appears outwardly; for it is God that overseeth us, and we should exceedingly stand in awe of Him, and walk in His sight wherever we may be, as the Angels do, in purity.

Every day we ought to renew our purpose, and *stir ourselves up to fervour, as if it were the first day of our conversion.* And to say, *Help me, O Lord God, in*

my good purpose, and in Thy holy service, and grant that I may this day begin indeed, since what I have hitherto done is nothing.

2. As our purpose is, so will our progress be; and there is need of much diligence for him that wisheth to advance much.

And if he who strongly purposeth doth yet oftentimes fail, what will he do that seldom or but weakly resolveth?

But the falling off from any good resolution happeneth many ways; and a trifling omission in our exercises hardly passeth over without some loss.

The resolutions of the just depend rather on the grace of God than on their own wisdom; and they always, whatever they take in hand, put their trust in Him.

For man proposeth, but God disposeth; neither is the way of man as he chooseth.

3. If, for piety sake, or for a brother's benefit, any accustomed exercise be sometimes omitted, it can easily be resumed afterwards.

But if it be laid aside lightly, out of weariness of mind or negligence, it is justly blameable, and will be found to do harm.

Let us try as much as we can, we shall still unavoidably fail in many things.

Nevertheless, we should always have some certain resolution, and especially against the things that are our greatest hinderances.

We must alike examine and set in order both our interior and exterior, for both are necessary to our advancement.

4. If thou canst not be continually recollected, at all events be so sometimes, and at least once a day ; in the morning, for example, or the evening.

In the morning frame thy purpose ; in the evening examine thy conduct, how thou hast behaved to-day in word, deed, and thought ; for it may be that in these thou hast many times offended God and thy neighbour.

Gird thyself up like a man to resist the wicked suggestions of the devil ; bridle

gluttony, and thou wilt the easier be every inclination of the flesh.

Never be wholly idle, but either read or writing, or praying, or meditating, labouring at something for the common good.

Nevertheless bodily exercises are to be practised with discretion, and not equiva-
lent to be undertaken by all.

5. Those things which are not common ought not to be done in public; what is private is more safely practised in secret.

But thou must take care not to be singular in what is common, and too ready to do what is singular; but when thou fully and faithfully fulfilled what is thy obligation, and whatever hath been joined thee, then if there be any time give thyself to thyself, as thy devotion may lead thee.

All cannot use the same exercise; one suits this person better, another that

Moreover according to the diversities of times are different exercises agree

some please on holydays, others suit better on common days.

We have need of one sort in time of temptation, of another in time of peace and quiet.

There are some things we love to think of when we are sad, and others when we are joyful in the Lord.

6. About the time of the principal festivals we should renew our good exercises, and implore more fervently the intercession of the Saints.

From festival to festival we should make our resolutions, as if we were then to depart from this world, and to come to the eternal festival.

And so we ought carefully to prepare ourselves in seasons of devotion, and walk the more devoutly, and keep every observance the more strictly, as if we were in a little while to receive from God the reward of our labour.

7. *And if it be put off, let us believe that we were not well enough prepared, and as yet unworthy of that so great glory,*

which shall be revealed to us in the time appointed; and let us study to prepare ourselves the better for our departure.

Blessed is that servant, saith the Evangelist St. Luke, whom, when the Lord shall come, he shall find watching. Amen, I say unto you, he shall set him over all his possessions.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

To engage us to die to ourselves, and to live to God and for God, how efficacious are lively desires when constantly directed to that object! for we ever accomplish what we earnestly desire; but our misfortune is, that oftentimes our desires of pleasing God are weak and feeble, while the desires of gratifying ourselves are strong and active. Hence proceeds the inefficacy of our good purposes, which is a great obstacle to perfection and salvation. We wish to give ourselves to God, and we wish it not; we desire to do so in time of prayer and the holy communion, and at other times we desire it not. We in part, and for a time only, would acquit ourselves of our duties; hence our lives become a succession of good desires and evil effects, of promises and infidelities. *Is this to labour effectually for salvation?*

PRAYER.

WEARY, O Lord, of the inefficacy of our desires, and of offering Thee only thoughts which we reduce not to practice, and promises which we never fulfil, we earnestly supplicate Thee to grant us the grace of adding effect to our desires, and of uniting the practice with the knowledge of virtue ; for we well know, as Thou teachest in the Gospel, that not every one who says " Lord, Lord," shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of Thy Father ; grant, therefore, O my Saviour, that I may not only think of and desire, but ever accomplish Thy blessed will. Amen.

CHAPTER XX.

OF THE LOVE OF SOLITUDE AND SILENCE.

SEEK a convenient time to attend to thyself ; and reflect often upon the benefits of God to thee.

Let curiosities alone.

Read such matters as may produce *compunction rather than give occupation.*

If thou wilt withdraw from superfluous

talking, and idle visitings, and from hearing new things and rumours, thou wilt find time sufficient and proper to spend in good meditations.

The greatest Saints shunned the company of men when they could, and chose rather to live unto God in secret.

2. As often as I have been among men, said one, I have returned less a man. This we too often experience when we talk long.

It is easier to keep silence altogether than not to fall into excess in speaking.

It is easier to keep retired at home than to be enough upon one's ground abroad.

He, therefore, who aims at inward and spiritual things, must, with Jesus, retire aside from the crowd.

No man can safely appear in public but he who loves seclusion.

No man can safely speak but he who loves silence.

No man can safely be a superior but who loves to live in subjection.

No man can safely command but he who hath learned how to obey well.

3. No man can rejoice securely but he who hath the testimony of a good conscience within.

Yet even the security of the Saints was always full of the fear of God.

Neither were they the less careful and humble in themselves, because they shone with great virtues and grace.

But the security of the wicked ariseth from their pride and presumption, and in the end turns to their own deception.

Never promise thyself security in this life, however good a religious or devout solitary thou mayest seem to be.

4. Oftentimes the highest in men's estimation have been in the greater danger, by reason of their too much confidence.

And hence it is more useful for many not to be wholly without temptations, but to be very often assaulted, lest they be too secure, *lest perhaps they be lifted up unto pride, and even turn aside, with too little restraint, after exterior consolations.*

Oh, how good a conscience would keep, who should never seek tran joys, and never busy himself about world!

Oh, how great peace and tranquillity would he have, who should cut off all solicitude, and think only of the thing God and his salvation, and place his hope in God!

5. No one is worthy of heavenly consolation who hath not diligently exercised himself in holy compunction.

If thou wouldst feel compunction in every heart, enter into thy chamber, shut out the tumult of the world; as is written, "Be sorry in your beds."

Thou wilt find in thy cell what thou wilt too often lose abroad.

The cell continually dwelt in great sweetness; but ill guarded, it begetteth bitterness.

If, in the beginning of thy religion, thou dwell in it and keep it well, it shall be to thee afterwards as a dear friend and most delightful solace.

6. In silence and quiet the devout soul maketh progress, and learneth the hidden things of Scripture.

There she findeth floods of tears, wherein each night she may wash and be cleansed; and so become the more familiar with her Creator, the further she dwelleth from all the tumult of the world.

For whoso withdraweth himself from acquaintances and friends, to him will God, with His holy Angels, draw near.

Better is it to lie hid and take diligent care of thyself, than, neglecting thyself, to work miracles.

Is it praiseworthy for a religious but seldom to go abroad, to shun being seen, and to have no wish to see men.

7. Why dost thou wish to see what it is not lawful for thee to have? The world passeth away, and its concupiscence.

The longings of sense draw thee to roam abroad; but when the hour hath passed away, *what dost thou bring back with thee but a weight upon thy conscience, and a dissipated heart.*

Oftentimes a joyous going ab
getteth a sorrowful return home
merry evening maketh a sorrowf
ing.

So all carnal joys enter pleasan
at the end bring remorse and dea

8. What canst thou see elsew
thou dost not see here? Behold
vens, and the earth, and all the el
for out of these are all things ma

9. What canst thou see any w
can last long under the sun?

Thou trustest that perchance t
be satisfied; but thou wilt never
to reach it.

If thou couldst see all things
before thee, what would it be
empty vision?

Lift up thine eyes to God on h
pray for thy sins and negligences.

Leave vain things to vain peop
thou to those things which God ha
manded thee.

*Shut thy door upon thee, and
thee Jesus thy beloved.*

Stay with Him in thy cell ; for nowhere else shalt thou find so great peace.

If thou hadst never left it, nor hearkened to any rumours, thou wouldst have remained longer in happy peace. But the moment thou delightest to give ear to novelty, thou must suffer from thence disquietude of heart.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

EXTERIOR retirement is not sufficient to engage and satisfy a heart which would really withdraw itself from creatures to be occupied on itself alone ; but interior retirement is likewise necessary, which is a spirit of recollection and prayer. A soul which is separated from all the amusements of the senses, seeks and finds in God that pure satisfaction which it can never meet with in creatures. A respectful and frequent remembrance of the presence of God occupies the mind, and an ardent desire of pleasing Him and of becoming worthy of His love engages the heart. It is absorbed in Him alone : all things else dwindle into nothing. It buries itself in its dear solitude, and dies to itself and all things in God ; it breathes *only His love*, it forgets all to remember *only Him* ; penetrated with grief for its infidelities, it mourns incessantly in his presence ; it

sights continually for the pleasure of seeing and possessing Him in heaven; it nourishes itself with reading good books and with the exercise of prayer; it is never tired of treating with God on the affairs of salvation, at least it humbly supports the irksomeness it may experience; and with a view of honouring His sovereign dominion by the complete destruction of sin in itself, it renounces all desire of finding any other satisfaction than that of pleasing Him.

PRAYER.

O MY God, when will silence, retirement, and prayer, become the occupations of my soul, as they are now frequently the objects of my desires! How am I wearied with saying so much and yet doing so little for Thee! Come Jesus come, Thou, the only object of my love, the centre and supreme happiness of my soul! come, and impress my mind with such a lively conviction of Thy presence that all within me may yield to Thy influence. Come, Lord, and speak to my heart, communicate to it Thy holy will, and mercifully work within it both to will and to do accord to Thy good pleasure. Alas! how long shall exile be prolonged! When shall the veil be moved which separates time from eternity? When shall I see that which I now believe? When shall I find what I seek! When shall I possess what I love, which is Thyself, O

Grant, O Jesus, that these holy desires with which Thou now inspirest me, may be followed by that eternal happiness which I hope for from Thy infinite mercy. Amen.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF COMPUNCTION OF HEART.

If thou wouldst make any progress, keep thyself in the fear of God, and be not too free: curb all thy senses under discipline, and give not thyself up to foolish mirth.

Give thyself to compunction of heart, and thou shalt find devotion.

Compunction opens the way to much good which dissipation is wont quickly to lose.

It is wonderful that any man can ever abandon himself wholly to joy in this life, when he considereth and weigheth his exile and *the many dangers of his soul.*

2. Through levity of heart and neglect of our defects we feel not the sorrows of

the soul ; and we often vainly laugh, when in all reason we should weep.

There is no true liberty nor profitable joy but in the fear of God with a good conscience.

Happy is the man that can cast away all the hinderance of distraction, and recollect himself in the unity of holy communion.

Happy is the man who casteth away from him whatever may stain or burden his conscience.

Strive manfully ; habit is overcome by habit.

If thou canst let men alone, they will let thee alone to do whatever thou hast to do.

3. Busy not thyself in matters which appertain to others ; and entangle not thyself in the affairs of the great.

Have always an eye upon thyself in the first place, and admonish thyself preferably to all thy dearest friends.

If thou hast not the favour of men, be not afflicted ; but let it seriously concern

thee, that thou dost not carry thyself so well and circumspectly as a servant of God and a devout religious ought to do.

Oftentimes it is better and safer for a man not to have many consolations in this life, especially such as are according to the flesh. Still that we have not divine comfort is our own fault, because we seek not compunction of heart, and do not wholly renounce vain and outward satisfactions.

4. Know that thou art unworthy of heavenly consolation, but rather deservest much tribulation.

When a man hath perfect compunction, then the whole world is to him burdensome and distasteful.

A good man findeth abundant matter for sorrow and tears.

For whether he considereth himself, or thinketh of his neighbour, he knoweth that no man liveth here below without tribulation.

And the more strictly he doth consider himself, the greater is his sorrow.

The subjects of just sorrow and interior

compunction are our sins and vices, in which we are so enwrapt, that we are seldom able to fix our mind on heavenly things.

5. Didst thou think oftener of thy death than of a long life, no doubt but thou wouldst be more in earnest for thy amendment.

Didst thou also well ponder in thy heart the future pains of hell or purgatory, methinks thou wouldst bear willingly labour and sorrow, and fear no kind of austerity.

But because these things reach not the heart, and we still love flattering pleasure, therefore we remain cold and very slothful.

Oftentimes it is our want of spirit that maketh the wretched body complain for so slight cause.

Pray therefore humbly to the Lord to give unto thee the spirit of compunction, and say with the Prophet, "*Feed me, O Lord, with the food of tears, and give me to drink of tears in measure.*"

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

CAN we be sensible of our miseries and not deplore them, and humble ourselves under them before God, and have continual recourse to Him to support and keep us from offending Him? It is this humble diffidence in ourselves, and firm confidence in God, which constitute the spirit of compunction of which the author speaks in this chapter. How is it possible we should taste true joy for one moment in this life, in which we are beset with miseries and sin—are continually in danger of being lost for ever, and are exiles from paradise, our true country? Well might St. Augustine say that a true Christian suffereth life, and sigheth after death, which will put an end to sin, and unite him for ever to his God. How afflicting to feel ever prone to offend God—always in danger of forfeiting salvation! O life! how burthensome art thou to a soul that truly loves God, and is grieved at being separated at a distance from Him—an exile from heaven! O death, how sweet art thou to a soul that breathes only God and can no longer exist without possessing Him!

PRAYER.

GRANT, O God, that my heart may become detached from all things, and, being wholly re-collected in Thee, relish no other pleasure than that of loving Thee, of acting and suffering for

Thy sake. I willingly consent to the sweet portion Thou allotest me to do, Thy will in thee patiently receiving all the pains Thou sendest me, that Thou mayest become my happiness eternally. What should I not do and suffer for such a reward? Keep me, O Lord, in the desire with which Thou now inspirest me, sparing no pains to obtain it. Amen.

CHAPTER XXII.

OF THE CONSIDERATION OF HUMAN MISERY.

WRETCHED art thou, wheresoever thou art, and whithersoever thou turn thee, if thou turn thyself unto God.

Why art thou troubled that thou art not with thee as thou wishest and desirest? Who is there that hath all things according to his will? Neither I, nor thou, nor any man upon earth.

There is no man in the world without some trouble or affliction, be he King or *Pope*.

Who, then, is the best off? to

that is able to suffer something for the sake of God.

2. Weakminded and inconstant people often say, See what a happy life that man leadeth! how rich he is, how great, how powerful and exalted!

But take heed to heavenly riches, and thou wilt see that all these temporal ones are nothing; yea, most uncertain, and rather a heavy burden, since they never are possessed without solicitude and fear.

Man's happiness is not the having temporal goods in abundance; but a moderate portion is sufficient for him.

Truly it is a misery to live upon the earth.

The more a man desireth to be spiritual, the more distasteful doth this present life become to him; for he the better understandeth, and more clearly seeth, the defects of human corruption.

For to eat, to drink, to watch, to sleep, to rest, to labour, and to be subject to the *other necessities of nature*, truly is a great *misery and affliction* to a devout man,

who longeth to be released, and done with all sin.

3. For the interior man is weighed down by the necessities of the body in this life.

Hence the Prophet devoutly that he may be free from them, "From my necessities deliver Lord."

But woe to them that know not their own misery; and still more woe to those that make this wretched and painful life the object of their love.

For some there are who cling closely, (though even by labouring and begging they hardly have bare necessities) that could they live here always they would care nothing for the kingdom of God.

4. Oh, senseless people, and, being in heart, to lie buried so in earthly things, as to relish nothing that is carnal!

Miserable men! yet a while, and they will feel bitterly what

s thing and nothing it was that they
ve been loving.

But the Saints of God, and all devoted
tends of Christ, looked not to what
leased the flesh, nor to what flourished
or the time of this life; but all their
hopes and aims aspired after the good
things that are eternal.

All their desire tended upwards to the
things everlasting and invisible, for fear
lest by the love of things visible they
should be dragged down to things be-
low.

Lose not, brother, thy confidence of
making spiritual progress; thou hast yet
time, the hour is not yet passed.

5. Why wilt thou put off thy purpose
from day to day? Arise, and begin this
very instant, and say, Now is the time to
do, now is the time to fight, now is the
proper time to amend my life.

When thou art troubled and afflicted,
then is the *time of merit*.

*Thou must pass through fire and water
before thou come to refreshment.*

Except thou do violence to thyself,
wilt not overcome vice.

As long as we carry about this
body, we cannot be free from sin,
live without weariness and sorrow.

Fain would we be at rest from
misery; but since we have lost innocence
through sin, we have lost also true
happiness.

We must therefore have patience
wait God's mercy, till iniquity pass
and this mortality be swallowed up
in life.

6. Oh, how great is human frailty
which is ever prone to vice!

To-day thou confessest thy sins, an
morrow thou again committest what
didst confess.

Now thou purposest to be upon
guard, and an hour after thou art acting
if thou hadst made no resolution.

Justly then may we humble ourselves
and never think any thing great of
selves; since we are so frail and unstable.
And even what we have at last

acquired through grace, and with great labour, may soon be lost through negligence.

7. What will become of us in the end, if we begin so early to grow lukewarm?

Woe to us if we thus wish to turn aside to rest, as if there were already peace and security, when there does not as yet appear a trace of true holiness in our deportment!

Very useful would it be for us to be yet again instructed, like good novices, to the highest morality; if, haply, there might be hope of some future improvement and greater spiritual progress.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

WHAT a happiness and what a gain to see and to find God, in whom we may forget all our cares, and end all our miseries! And how happy are we in knowing and feeling that it is really true happiness, a heaven upon earth, to suffer all for God's sake, even such things as are most humiliating and repugnant to our nature! *for this can proceed only from the true love of God. How miserable are we, if we are not sensible of or love the miseries of this life, and*

sigh not incessantly for the enjoyments of life to come! How justly does St. Gregory observe that to act thus is to love hunger and misery, and not to love nourishment and happiness! Can we experience every hour, as we the inconstancy and frailty of our hearts, but soon we forget our good resolutions, and highlight we make of our promises to God, and humble ourselves in His presence, and implore Him, with holy Judith, to fortify us and make faithful?

PRAYER.

WE beseech Thee, O Father of mercies, a God of all consolation, to support us in the perpetual combats we are summoned to maintain against our passions, our self-love, and our weakness, which is so opposed to Thee; for alas! God, what can we do of ourselves, if Thou support us not, but fall into sin and offend Thee. Leave us not, therefore, to ourselves, but strengthen us in the inward man, that so we may at times and in all things renounce our evil inclinations, which are incessantly endeavouring to withdraw our hearts from Thee. Complete Thy conquest, and make us all Thine own both now and for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF THE THOUGHTS OF DEATH.

A VERY little while and all will be over with thee here. See to it, how it stands with thee in the next life. Man to-day is, and to-morrow he is seen no more.

And when he is taken away from the sight, he is quickly also out of mind.

Oh, the dulness and the hardness of the human heart, that dwelleth only upon things present, instead rather of providing for those which are to come !

Thou shouldst so order thyself in every deed and thought as if thou were immediately to die.

If thou hadst a good conscience, thou wouldst not much fear death.

It were better to shun sin than to fly death.

If thou art *not* prepared to-day, how wilt thou be to-morrow ?

To-morrow is an uncertain day ; and

how knowest thou if thou shalt have to-morrow?

2. Of what use is it to live long, when we advance so little?

Ah, long life doth not always amend us; nay, oftentimes doth rather augment our guilt.

Would that even for one day we had behaved ourselves well in this world!

Many count the years of their conversion, but oftentimes the fruit of amendment is but little.

If it is a fearful thing to die, perhaps it will be still more dangerous to live longer.

Blessed is the man that hath the hour of his death continually before his eyes, and daily putteth himself in order for death.

If thou hast at any time seen a person die, reflect that thou too must pass the same way.

3. When it is morning, think thou wilt not live till evening.

And when evening comes, venture not to promise thyself the next morning.

Be therefore always in readiness, and so live, that death may never find thee unprepared.

Many die suddenly and unprovidedly; for the Son of Man will come at the hour when He is not looked for.

When that last hour shall have come, then thou wilt begin to think far otherwise of all thy past life; and great will be thy grief, that thou hast been so neglectful and remiss.

4. How happy and how prudent is he who now striveth to be in life what he would fain be found in death.

For it will give great confidence of dying happily, to have a perfect contempt of the world, a fervent desire to advance in virtue, a love of discipline, the spirit of penance, readiness of obedience, abnegation of self, and patience to bear any kind of adversity for the love of Christ.

Many are the good works thou canst do whilst in *health*; but when thou art *sick*, *I know not what* thou wilt be able to do.

Few are improved by sickness ; so also they that go much abroad seldom grow in sanctity.

5. Trust not in thy friends and neighbours, and put not off thy soul's welfare till the future, for men will forget thee sooner than thou thinkest.

It is better to provide now in time, and send some good before thee, than to trust to the assistance of others after death.

If thou art not solicitous for thyself now, who will be solicitous for thee hereafter ?

Now is the time very precious, now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation.

But, O misery ! that thou spendest not this time more profitably, wherein thou hast it in thy power to merit that thou mayest live eternally.

The time will come when thou wilt fain implore one day or even one hour for amendment ; and I know not if thou wilt *obtain it*.

6. *Oh, then, dearly beloved, from what*

; danger mayst thou free thyself,
; what great fear be rescued, if only
; wouldst be always fearful, and look-
for death !

Study, therefore, so to live now, that
the hour of death thou mayest be able
ther to rejoice than to fear.

Learn now to die to the world, that
then thou mayest begin to live with Christ.

Learn now to despise all things, that
then thou mayest freely go to Christ.

Chastise thy body now by penance, that
then thou mayest have a certain confidence.

7. Ah, fool ! why thinkest thou to live
long, when' here thou hast not a day se-
cure ?

How many souls have been deceived,
and snatched unexpectedly from life.

How often hast thou heard related, that
such a one fell by the sword, another is
drowned, another falling from on high
broke his neck, this man died at table,
that other came to his end at play !

*Some perish by fire, some by the sword,
some by pestilence, some by the hands of*

robbers; and so death is the end of all; and man's life passeth away suddenly like a shadow.

8. Who will remember thee when thou art dead? and who will pray for thee?

Do now, beloved, do now, all thou canst; for thou knowest not when thou art to die, and, moreover, thou knowest not what will befall thee after death.

Whilst thou hast time, amass for thyself immortal riches.

Think of nothing but thy salvation; care only for the things of God.

Make to thyself friends now, by venerating the Saints of God, and imitating their actions, that when thou shalt fail in this life, they may receive thee into everlasting dwellings.

9. Keep thyself as a pilgrim and a stranger upon earth, that hath no concern with the business of the world.

Keep thy heart free and lifted up to God, for thou hast not here a lasting city.

Send thither thy prayers and daily sighs,

with tears, that thy spirit may merit after death to pass happily to our Lord. Amen.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

To fear death, and not to avoid sin, which alone can make it really terrible, is to fear it unavailably for salvation; for, as Christians, we ought to dread it so as to make the fear of it the motive and rule of a good life. The great secret of dying happily is to live always in the same state in which we hope to die, and in which we desire that God may find us when our last hour shall have arrived. We should therefore do all the good and practise all the virtues now, which we shall then wish to have done and practised. Endeavour to die daily to some one of all those things which, when thou departest hence, thou must leave for ever. Happy the Christian who dies often in spirit ere he quits the flesh. His death shall be holy and precious in the sight of God.

PRAYER.

KNOWING that I shall certainly die, but ignorant of the day, of the hour, and of the state of my soul, in which I shall depart hence, I beseech Thee, most blessed Saviour, by the merits of Thy sacred passion, to prepare me for that awful moment. Assist me to become diligent in my employments, faithful to Thy graces, attentive at

my prayers, regular in frequenting the sacraments, and constant in the performance of the good works, and in the practice of those virtues which are proper for my state ; that so, through Thy merits, I may experience consolation in last moments, and leave this valley of tears with the assured hope of salvation. Grant that I may ever persevere in Thy grace, seek in all things to please Thee, and breathe only Thy life for living thus, my Jesus, by Thee, for Thee, like unto Thee, it will be at all times most advantageous for me to die, that I may never offend Thee more, but see, love, and enjoy Thee for all eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF JUDGMENT, AND THE PUNISHMENTS OF SINNERS.

IN all things look to the end, and how thou wilt stand before the strict Judge, for whom there is nothing hid ; who takes no bribes, and receives no excuses, but will judge that which is just.

O most miserable and foolish sinner, what wilt thou answer unto God,

knoweth all thy evil deeds,—thou who art sometimes afraid of the countenance of an angry man ?

Why dost thou not provide thee against the day of judgment, when no man can be excused or defended by another, but each one will have enough to do to answer for himself ?

Now thy labour is profitable, thy tears are acceptable, thy groans are heard, thy sorrow is satisfying and purifieth the soul.

2. The patient man hath a great and wholesome purgatory ; who, suffering wrongs, is more concerned at another's malice than at his own injury ; who prays freely for his adversaries, forgiving their offences from his heart ; who delays not to ask pardon of others ; who is easier moved to pity than to anger ; who does frequent violence to himself ; and strives to bring his flesh wholly in subjection to the spirit.

Better is it to *purge away our sins, and cut off our vices now, than to keep them for purgation hereafter.*

Truly we deceive ourselves, through the inordinate love we bear the flesh.

3. What else will that fire devour but thy sins?

The more thou sparest thyself now, and followest the flesh, so much the more dearly shalt thou pay for it hereafter, and the more fuel dost thou lay up for that fire.

In what things a man hath most sinned, in those things shall he be most grievously punished.

There the slothful will be pricked with burning goads, the gluttonous tormented with extreme hunger and thirst; there the luxurious and the lovers of pleasure will have burning pitch and fetid sulphur rained upon them; and the envious, like rabid dogs, will howl for grief.

4. There will be no vice but will have its own peculiar torment.

There the proud will be filled with all confusion, and the avaricious pinched with *the most miserable want.*

There one hour of punishment will be

more grievous than a hundred years of most bitter penance here.

There will be no rest, no consolation for the damned; but here we sometimes rest from labour, and enjoy the consolation of our friends.

Be therefore now solicitous and sorrowful for thy sins, that in the day of judgment thou mayest be in security with the just: for then the just shall stand with constancy against those that have sinned and oppressed them.

Then will he stand up to judge who now only submitteth himself to the judgment of men.

Then shall the poor and humble have confidence, and the proud will fear every side.

Then will it appear that he was wise in this world, who for Christ's sake learned to be as a fool and despised.

Then every tribulation borne with patience shall be *pleasing*, and all iniquity shall be *topped* by her mouth.

Then shall every devout person rejoice, and all the irreligious shall be sad.

Then shall the flesh that was afflicted exult more than if it had always fared in delights.

Then shall the mean habits shine, and the fine garment grow dingy.

Then shall the poor cottage be praised above the gilded palace.

Then shall enduring patience more avail than all the power of the world.

Then shall simple obedience be more highly exalted than all worldly cunning.

6. Then a pure and good conscience shall bring more joy than learned philosophy.

Then shall the contempt of riches far outweigh all the treasures of the children of earth.

Then shalt thou find more consolation in having prayed devoutly, than in having feasted daintily.

Then shalt thou rejoice more in having *kept silence*, than for having made long *discourses*, or talked much.

Then shall holy works be of greater value than multitudes of goodly words.

Then shall strictness of life and hard penance please more than all the delights of earth.

Learn to suffer in little things now, that then thou mayest be delivered from more grievous sufferings.

Try first here what thou canst bear hereafter.

If now thou canst endure so little, how wilt thou be able to suffer eternal torments?

If now a little suffering makes thee so impatient, what will hell do then?

Behold, assuredly, both joys thou canst not have,—to delight thyself here in this world, and afterwards to reign with Christ.

7. If up to this very day thou hadst always lived in honours and pleasures, what would it all profit thee, did it happen that thou must immediately die?

All therefore is *vanity*, except to love God and serve Him only.

For he that loveth God with his whole

heart, feareth neither death, nor punishment, nor judgment, nor hell; for perfect love giveth secure access to God.

But he who still finds delight in sin, no wonder if he fear death and judgment.

It is good, however, if love as yet reclaim thee not from evil, that at least the fear of hell do check thee.

For, indeed, he that setteth aside the fear of God will not be able to persevere long in good, but will very soon fall into the snares of the devil.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

How powerfully do the fear of God's judgments and the dread of a miserable eternity act as a restraint upon our passions, arrest the sallies of temper, and oblige us to withdraw from the allurements and pleasures of sin! To what end (let us say to ourselves in time of temptation) is the criminal pleasure of this sin of revenge, impurity, anger, injustice, or lying!—to afford myself a momentary gratification. And should I die immediately after having yielded, without repentance, without the sacraments, (*which may happen, and which does happen to thousands,*) where will this sinful enjoyment ter-

ate!—in a miserable eternity. A momentaryasure, an eternity of pain! No, I will notlose myself to the danger of being miserafor ever, for the sake of a moment of pleasae. How true it is, according to the wise man,at to avoid sin, at least habitual sin, we mustremember our last end. Did we frequently anderiously reflect that we must one day give anexact account of our consciences, of the conductof our whole lives, of all our sins, to a Judgewho knoweth and remembereth all things; who would not be terrified at the apprehension of judgment, and of the terrible account we are then to give, and would not watch over himself, and endeavour to correct all his faults? Let us be convinced that the sure way to avoid condemnation in the next life, is to condemn and punish ourselves in this.

PRAYER.

O SOVEREIGN Judge of the living and the dead! who, at the moment of our death, will decide our eternal doom, remember that Thou art our Saviour as well as our Judge, and that, as much as our sins have provoked Thee to wrath, Thy sacred wounds have inclined Thee to mercy. Look therefore on those wounds inflicted on Thee for our *sins*, and on the blood which *Thou hast shed for their expiation*, and by those *precious pledges of salvation* we conjure Thee to *ardon our manifold transgressions*. Amen.

CHAPTER XXV.

OF THE FERVENT AMENDMENT OF OUR W

Be watchful and diligent in the
of God, and often reflect: What
come hither for, and why hast
the world? Was it not that thou
est live for God, and become a
man?

Be fervent, then, in making
for thou shalt shortly receive the
of thy labours, and then neither
sorrow shall come near thy border.

Thou shalt labour a little now,
shalt find great rest, yea, everlasting.

If thou continue faithful and
doing, God will doubtless be faithful
rich in rewarding.

Thou must keep a good and firm
of coming to the crown; but thou
not be too secure, lest thou grow
or be lifted up.

2. When a certain anxious person
oftentimes wavered between

once overcome with sadness, threw self upon the ground in prayer before of the altars in the church, and re- ing these things in his mind, said, Oh, only knew that I should persevere: very instant he heard within him heavenly answer: And if thou didst w this, what wouldst thou do? Do what thou wouldst then do, and thou t be perfectly secure.

nd immediately being consoled and forted, he committed himself to the ne will, and his anxious wavering ed.

le had no longer any wish for curious things to find out what should happen im, but studied rather to learn what the acceptable and perfect will of God the beginning and the perfecting of y good work.

“Hope in the Lord,” saith the Pro- , “and do good, and inhabit the land, thou *shalt be fed with the riches of.*”

re is one thing that keepeth many

back from spiritual progress, and from fervour in amendment; namely, a dread of the difficulty or of the labour that necessary in the struggle.

And assuredly they especially advance beyond others in virtue, who strive the most manfully to overcome the very things which are the hardest and most contrary to them.

For there a man doth profit most and merit more abundant grace, where he doth most overcome himself and mortify his spirit.

4. All have not, indeed, equal difficulties to overcome and mortify; but a diligent and zealous person will make greater progress, though he have more passions than another who is well-regulated, but less fervent in the pursuit of virtues.

Two things especially conduce to great improvement; namely, forcibly to withdraw oneself from what nature is viciously *inclined to*, and fervently to follow up the *good one* is most in need of.

Study, likewise, especially to go

against and to get the better of such things as oftenest displease thee in others.

5. Turn all occasions to thy spiritual profit, so that the good examples thou mayest see or hear of may stir thee up to imitate them.

And whatever thou shalt observe that is blameworthy, take care not to do the same thing thyself; or if thou have ever done so, study to amend as soon as possible.

As thine eye observeth others, so again thou art also observed by others.

How pleasant and sweet is it to see brethren fervent and devout, well-mannered and well-disciplined!

How sad and afflicting to see them walking disorderly, and not practising the things that they are called to!

How mischievous it is to neglect the purpose of their vocation, and turn their minds to what is not their business!

6. Do thou *be mindful* of the purpose *thou hast undertaken*, and place before *thee the image of the Crucified*.

Well mayest thou be ashamed looking into the life of Jesus Christ as yet thou hast not studied more form thyself to Him, long as thou hast been in the way of God.

The religious who exerciseth himself earnestly and devoutly in the more life and passion of our Lord, shall there abundantly all that is use necessary for him ; nor need he seek of Jesus for any thing better.

Oh, if the crucified Jesus should enter into our heart, how quickly and surely learned should we be !

7. The fervent religious beareth taketh all things well, whatever he is commanded.

The negligent and lukewarm religious hath trouble upon trouble, and anguish on every side ; for he has no consolation within, and is forbidden to find it without.

The religious that liveth out of discipline is exposed to dreadful ruin.

He that is seeking to be more

unrestrained will always be in trouble; for one thing or other will ever disgust him.

8. How do so many other religious do, who live most strictly under the cloistered discipline?

They seldom go abroad, they live retired, they are fed on the very poorest, they are coarsely clad, they labour much, they talk little, they keep late vigils, they rise early, they spend much time in prayer, they read frequently, and keep themselves in all discipline.

Consider the Carthusians and the Cistercians, and the monks and nuns of other religious orders, how they rise every night to sing praises to the Lord! And what a shame it would be for thee to grow slothful at such a time, when so great a multitude of religious are beginning to sing aloud with joy to God!

9. Oh, if there were nothing else to do but praise the Lord our God with all our heart and voice! *Oh, if thou didst never require to eat, or drink, or sleep, but couldst be always praising God, and oc-*

cupied with spiritual pursuits only, thou wouldst be much happier than since thou art a slave to the flesh. necessities of every kind.

Would to God that there were not these necessities, but only spiritual rations required for the soul. These, it is seldom enough we taste!

10. When a man hath arrived at that he seeks his consolation from a created thing, then first doth he begin to taste what God is; then, too, will be well content with every thing happens.

Then will he neither rejoice for much nor be sorrowful for little, but will commit himself wholly and confiding to God, who is to him all in all; to whom nothing is lost or dieth, but for whom things live, and at whose beck they instantly obey.

11. Ever keep in mind thine end *that time lost returneth no more.*

Without care and diligence thou never acquire virtues.

If once thou beginnest to grow lukewarm, thou beginnest to be in a bad state.

But if thou give thyself to fervour, thou shalt find great peace; and thou shalt feel thy labour light, through the grace of God, and for the love of virtue.

The fervent and diligent man is ready for all things.

It is harder labour to withstand our vices and passions than to toil at bodily labours.

He that shunneth not small defects, by little and little falleth into greater.

Thou wilt always be glad in the evening, if thou spend the day profitably.

Watch over thyself, stir up thyself, admonish thyself, and whatever may become of others, neglect not thyself.

In proportion as thou dost violence to thyself, the greater progress wilt thou make. Amen.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

ACCORDING to our zeal for advancement, we take advantage of the good we see to practise it, and to carry us to God. To advance in virtue,

we must overcome and renounce ourselves in all things, and die to the insatiable desires of our heart. It is certain that we can merit in the service of God only in proportion as we do violence to ourselves. Wherefore, let us fight against and subdue the irregular inclinations which allure us to sin or to relaxation of our fervour: by this means we shall secure our salvation. A vigorous, constant, and generous effort to overcome ourselves, forwards us more in the ways of perfection and salvation than all those fruitless desires by which we would give ourselves to God, yet we do not what we would. The more we die to ourselves, the more do we live to God: and the more we refuse to gratify ourselves, so much the more do we please him. How delightful must the life of that Christian be whose desires are so regulated that his chief happiness is in denying himself, and pleasing God! How sure a means of obtaining a happy eternity!

PRAYER.

THOU knowest, O Jesus, the extreme difficulty we experience in subduing and subjecting ourselves to Thee; suffer not this difficulty to hinder us from accomplishing it. It is just we should prefer Thy glory, and Thy holy will, to our own will and gratification, and hence we are *resolved to do so*. Strengthen us in this resolution, and make us faithful; grant that all in us

may yield to Thee, that, advancing daily in virtue, and leading a supernatural and, through Thy merits, an acceptable life, we may become worthy of Thy grace here, and of Thy eternal glory hereafter. Amen.

Book Second.

CHAPTER I.

OF INTERIOR CONVERSATION.

THE kingdom of God is within you, saith the Lord.

Turn thee unto the Lord with thy whole heart, and quit this miserable world, and thy soul shall find rest.

Learn to slight exterior things, and to give thyself to interior things, and thou shalt see the kingdom of God come within thee.

The kingdom of God is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; which is not given to the wicked.

Christ will come to thee, and discover His consolation to thee, if thou wilt prepare for Him a fit dwelling within thee.

All His glory and beauty are from

within; and there it is that He taketh delight.

Many are His visits to the man of interior life, and sweet the conversation that He holdeth with him; plenteous His consolation, His peace, and His familiarity.

2. Come, then, faithful soul, make thy heart ready for this spouse, so that He may vouchsafe to come to thee and to dwell within thee.

For so He saith, "If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him; we will come to him, and make our abode with him."

Give admittance, therefore, to Christ, and refuse entrance to all beside.

When thou hast Christ, thou art rich, and He is sufficient for thee.

He will provide for thee, and be thy faithful procurator in all things; so that thou needest not to trust in men.

For men soon change, and they quickly fail; but Christ abideth for ever, and *standeth by us firmly to the end.*

3. *No great confidence must we place*

in frail and mortal man, useful thou be, and dearly beloved ; nor shouldst be much grieved if he sometimes o and contradict thee.

They that to-day are with the morrow may be against thee ; and often change to the contrary, lik wind.

Put thy whole trust in God, an Him be thy fear and thy love.

He will answer for thee, and wil ciously do for thee as shall be best.

Here thou hast no abiding city wherever thou shalt be, thou art a str and a pilgrim ; nor wilt thou ever rest, except thou be interiorly united Christ.

4. Why dost thou stand looking thee here, since this is not the place of rest ?

Thy abode must be in heaven, and shouldst look upon all earthly things were in passing.

All things pass away, and thou along with them.

See thou cleave not to them, lest thou be ensnared, and perish.

Let thy thoughts be with the Most High, and let thy prayers be sent forth without ceasing unto Christ.

If thou knowest not how to meditate on high and heavenly things, rest in the passion of Christ, and love to dwell within His sacred wounds.

For if thou devoutly betake thyself to the wounds and precious stigmas of Jesus, thou shalt feel great comfort in tribulation; thou wilt not care much for being slighted by man, and wilt easily bear the speeches of detractors.

5. Christ also was despised by men in the world, and in His greatest need He was, by His acquaintance and His friends, forsaken amidst insults.

Christ was willing to suffer and to be despised, and darest thou complain of aught?

Christ had *enemies and detractors*, and *wouldst thou have all to be thy friends and benefactors?*

Whence shall thy patience be crowne if thou meet with no adversity?

If thou wilt suffer no contradiction, he canst thou be the friend of Christ?

Endure with Christ and for Christ, thou wouldst reign with Christ.

6. If thou hadst once perfectly enter into the interior of Jesus, and tasted little of His ardent love, then wouldst thou care but little for thy own convenience inconvenience; but wouldst rather rejoice at reproach; for the love of Jesus make a man despise himself.

A lover of Jesus and the truth, a true interior person, who is free from inordinate affections, can freely turn himself to God, elevate himself above himself, and enjoy a delightful repose.

7. He whose taste discerneth all things as they are, and not as they are said or accounted to be, is truly a wise man, and taught rather of God than of men.

He that knoweth how to walk interiorly, and to make but little account of things exteriorly, doth not look for p

nor wait for seasons, to perform exercises of devotion.

The man of interior life soon recollecteth himself, because he never wholly poureth forth himself upon exterior things.

Exterior labour is no prejudice to him, nor any employment necessary for the time; but as things happen, so he accommodateth himself to them.

He who is well disposed and orderly in his interior is not concerned about the strange and perverse doings of men.

Just so much is a man hindered and distracted in proportion as he draws things to himself.

8. If all were right within thee, and thou wert well-purified, all things would tend to thy good and thy profit.

The reason why many things displease thee, and oftentimes disturb thee, is, that thou art not yet perfectly dead to thyself, nor detached from earthly things.

There is *nothing that* so defileth and *entangleth the heart of man* as an impure *attachment to created things*.

If thou wilt refuse exterior conso then shalt thou be able to apply th to heavenly things, and experier quent interior joy.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

“CONVERT thyself with thy whole hea Lord. Learn to despise exterior things, thyself to the interior.” These words that the true happiness and only merit life consist in retirement and recollection which are maintained by means of a remembrance of His presence, and a turning of souls towards Him. A remind and a faithful heart form the cha an interior man who adores God in spiri truth, that is, who pays Him that inter age which becometh His sovereign gr and is so necessary for a soul whose sole is to live in God and for God. It is this of God in the soul, this establishment of in God, by raising itself up to Him in si lamentations, and by casting its whole s Him, which enables it to live an interior life of merit, and above nature, which is s upon earth, and an anticipated possessio *felicity of God.* I am resolved therefore *tify my senses,* to banish from my mind *and useless reflections,* and to keep a s

over my heart, that nothing may enter therein but what will promote the fear and love of Jesus Christ. Every thing else shall be to me as though it were not; and I will endeavour, above all things, to know, love, and imitate my Redeemer, content to suffer all for Him and in Him, that I may one day reign with Him. O my soul! breathe only His love, live only to please Him, sigh only for the happiness of possessing Him.

PRAYER.

O MY most amiable Saviour! the life of my soul! the only object of my hope, and the assurance of my salvation! come, take possession of my heart, which is already Thine, infuse into it the spirit of Thy mysteries, Thy interior dispositions, and the virtues which Thou didst practise. Grant that, animated by Thy Spirit, living in and by Thee, and, as it were, clothed with Thy justice, I may become more Thine than my own. Mayest Thou live in me; and may I, by a happy transmutation, yielding myself entirely to Thee, act only from the influence of Thy love. Amen.

CHAPTER II.

OF HUMBLE SUBMISSION.

MAKE no great account of who may be for thee or against thee, but mind ~~an~~ take care that God be with thee in every thing thou dost.

Have a good conscience, and God will sufficiently defend thee; for he whom God will help, no man's malice can hurt.

If thou knowest only how to be silent and to endure, doubt not but that thou shalt experience help from the Lord.

He knoweth the time and the manner of thy deliverance; and therefore it is thy part to resign thyself into His hands.

It belongs to God to help us and deliver us from all confusion.

Many a time it is a great advantage to us, for the keeping us in greater humility, that others know and reprehend our faults.

2. When a man humbleth himself & his faults, then he readily pacifieth others.

and easily satisfieth those who are angry with him.

The humble man God protecteth and delivereth; the humble He loveth and consoleth; to the humble He inclineth Himself; on the humble He bestowethounteous grace, and after he hath beenrought low, raiseth him up unto glory.

To the humble He revealeth His secrets, and sweetly inviteth and draweth him unto Himself.

The humble man, in the midst of reproaches, remaineth in great peace; for his dependence is on God, and not on the world.

Never think that thou hast thyself made any progress until thou feel that thou art inferior to all.

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PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

How easy it is, when we are approved of, esteemed and praised by others, to say we are unworthy of such honour, and deserve only contempt. To know *whether we speak the truth*, let us see *we should say the same under contempt*. Upon *point I am resolved to accept*, as from the

hands of God, all the evil that may be said done against me, as my due; and, far from murmuring, I will bless the Lord for permitting others to do me justice, that He may show me mercies, esteeming it too great a happiness to die, and not to be extinguished in the minds of men, that I may live only in the mind of God by the love of contempt, and the practice of true humility.

PRAYER.

Thou knowest, O God, how sensible I am of contradictions, calumnies, and contempt. Every thing revolts within me when I have occasion to suffer them. But I know also that what is impossible to me is easy to Thee, and that, supported and fortified by the help of Thy grace, I can patiently endure humiliations, which, of myself, I should receive with murmurs and vexations. Grant, then, O my Saviour, that imbued with Thy maxims, and animated by Thy spirit, I may regard with horror the glory, esteem, and praise which so often render me contemptible in Thy sight; and, on the contrary, receive injuries and affronts with submission and gratitude, that I may hope to become the object of thy love and the possessor of eternal glory. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE GOOD PEACEABLE MAN.

FIRST keep thyself in peace, and then shalt thou be able to bring others to peace.

The peaceable man does more good than one that is very learned.

The passionate man turneth even good to evil, and readily believeth evil.

The good peaceable man turneth all things unto good.

He that is in perfect peace suspecteth no man.

But he that is discontented and disturbed is agitated by various suspicions; he neither hath rest himself, nor suffereth others to rest.

Many a time he saith what he ought not to say, and leaveth undone that which it were best for him to do.

He considers what others ought to do, and neglecteth that which he is bound to do himself.

Have, therefore, a zeal in the first over thyself, and then mayest thou justly exercise zeal towards thy neighbour.

2. Thou knowest well how to excuse and gloss over thine own deeds, but wilt not accept the excuses of others.

It were more just for thee to excuse thyself, and to excuse thy brother.

If thou wishest to be borne with, also with others.

See how far thou yet art from charity and humility ; which knoweth how to feel anger or indignation against any one but oneself.

It is no great thing to associate with good and the gentle ; for this is naturally pleasing to all, and every one prefers peace, and loveth best those that have like sentiments.

But to be able to live peacefully with the hard and the perverse, or with the undisciplined and those who contradict, *is a great grace, and a highly commendable and manly thing.*

3. Some there are who keep themselves in peace, and have peace also with others; and there are some who neither have peace themselves, nor leave others in peace; they are troublesome to others, and still more troublesome to themselves.

And there are those who keep themselves in peace, and study to restore peace to others.

Nevertheless, all our peace in this miserable life must be placed rather in humble endurance than in not experiencing oppositions.

He who best knows how to endure will possess the greater peace.

Such a one is conqueror of himself and of the world, the friend of Christ and heir of heaven.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

GRANTING the principle laid down in this chapter; that true peace consists much more in humbly submitting to what is contrary to our inclinations, than in meeting with nothing to thwart; we must resolve to keep peace in contra-

dictions, and to be calm in the midst of storm patiently and meekly enduring persecution. All the evil that others may do or say against A soul that is truly humble complains only itself; it endeavours to excuse others, while blames itself, and is angry with no one but itself. I am resolved, therefore, to live in peace with God, by obeying Him in all things; in peace with my neighbour, by not censuring his conduct interfering with his affairs; and in peace with myself, by combating and subduing, on all occasions, the emotions and repugnances of my heart.

PRAYER.

THOU hast said, O Lord, by the mouth of Thy Prophet, *seek after peace and pursue it, thou cease not to seek it until thou hast found it.* Only Thou, my Jesus, canst bestow it upon me for Thou alone didst accomplish my peace reconciliation with Thy Father upon the Cross. I have long sought to live in peace with Thee with my neighbour, and with myself; but my infidelities, my selfish feelings, and the sallies of passion are causes of perpetual trouble to my soul, and hinder me from tasting its sweets. O my Saviour, Thou who didst calm the tempest Thou whom the winds and the sea obeyed, calm the agitations of my troubled soul, which can find true repose but in Thee. Grant me resigning myself in all things to Thy blessed

I may find peace and happiness in being, doing, quitting, and suffering whatever Thou shalt appoint. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

OF A PURE MIND AND A SIMPLE INTENTION.

By two wings is man lifted above earthly things, viz., by simplicity and purity.

Simplicity must be in the intention, purity in the affection.

Simplicity aimeth at God, purity apprehendeth Him and tasteth Him.

No good work will be a hinderance to thee, provided thou be free interiorly from all inordinate affection.

If thou aim at and seek after nothing else but the will of God and thy neighbour's benefit, then shalt thou enjoy interior liberty.

If only thy heart were right, then every created thing would be to thee a mirror of life and a book of holy teaching.

There is no creature so little and so

vile, that it sheweth not forth the goodness of God.

2. If thou wert inwardly good and pure, then wouldst thou discern all things without impediment, and comprehend them well.

A pure heart penetrates heaven and hell.

According as every one is interiorly, so doth he judge exteriorly.

If there be joy in the world, truly the man of pure heart possesseth it.

And if there be any where tribulation and distress, an evil conscience doth the more readily experience it.

As iron cast into the fire loses its rust, and becomes all bright with burning, so the man that turneth himself wholly to God is divested of all sloth, and changed into a new man.

3. When a man beginneth to grow lukewarm, then he is afraid of a little labour, and willingly receiveth exterior consolation.

But when he beginneth perfectly to

overcome himself, and to walk manfully in the way of God, then he maketh little account of things that before seemed to him grievous.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

PURITY of heart consists in detachment from every thing that can defile it. A voluntary fault, an unguarded glance of the eye, a turning away from God, imprint a blemish upon the soul which defaces its beauty, and disfigures it in the sight of God. *Blessed, says Jesus Christ, are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.* They shall know Him by a lively and experimental faith in this life, which shall enable them to support the invisible things of God as though they were present to their sight; and in the next life they shall see Him by the light of His glory. We must therefore be determined, as far as we are able, not to commit any known sin, much less to contract a habit of any that can sully the purity of the soul, and make it a slave to self-love, endear it to the pleasures of sense, and render it incapable of elevating itself towards God. We must, moreover, in order to obtain this purity of heart, incessantly ask it of God, saying with the psalmist: *Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit within my bowels, that is, a pure intention, by which I may seek only to*

please Thee in and before all things. If we must be attached to nothing but God's holy will ; for all attachment to creatures diminishes the beauty of the soul, and renders it incapable and unworthy of being united to God.

PRAYER.

O JESUS, who hast so strongly recom-
mended us, in the Gospel, to become humble, and
as little children, if we would enter into the
Kingdom of Heaven, grant us that state of
spiritual infancy, and that simplicity of
purity of heart, which may make us worthy
of Thy love. Amen.

CHAPTER V.

OF SELF-CONSIDERATION.

WE may not trust too much
in ourselves ; for grace and understanding
are often wanting to us.

There is in us but little light, and
we soon lose by negligence.

*Oftentimes we are quite unconscious
how interiorly blind we are.*

We often do amiss, and do worse in
excusing ourselves.

Sometimes we are moved by passion,
and think it zeal.

We blame little things in others, and
overlook great things in ourselves.

We are quick enough in perceiving and
weighing what we hear from others; but
we think little of what others have to
bear from us.

He that should well and justly weigh
his own doings would find little cause to
judge harshly of another.

2. The interior man regardeth the care
of himself before all other cares; and
he that looketh diligently to himself find-
eth it not difficult to be silent about
others.

Thou wilt never be interior and devout
unless thou pass over in silence other
men's affairs, and look especially to thy-
self.

If thou attend wholly to thyself and to
*God, what thou seest abroad will affect
thee but little.*

Where art thou when thou art
from thyself?

And when thou hast run over all
what hath it profited thee if thou
neglected thyself?

If thou wouldst have true peace
perfect union, thou must cast all
else aside, and keep thy eyes upon
alone.

3. Thou wilt make great progress
thou keep thyself free from every
poreal anxiety.

Thou wilt fall back exceeding
thou make account of any thing
real.

Let there be nothing great, nor
high, nothing pleasant, nothing agreeable
to thee but only God Himself, or
comes from God.

Think it all vanity, whatever
creation thou mayst meet with from
creature.

*The soul that loveth God despise
things that are less than God.*

God only, the eternal and infinite

fillet all things, is the solace of the soul and the true joy of the heart.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

USELESS reflections upon ourselves and upon exterior things occasion us to lose much time, many graces, and much merit. Did we but endeavour to substitute a respectful remembrance of God, in place of a vain and hurtful attention to ourselves and to creatures, we should be always well employed. To consider God as within us, and ourselves as existing in God; to live under the eye of Jesus Christ by means of recollection, in His hands by resignation, and at His feet by humility and a sincere acknowledgment of our miseries, is to live really as Christians; for we can only be such in proportion as we are devoted to Jesus Christ. Why then are we so much and so frequently attracted by news, curiosities, and vanity, and so little interested with God, our duties, and our salvation? It is because we are indifferent to the things of eternity, and too much attached to those which pass away with time. Let us, therefore, begin to be now what we hope to be for ever—occupied only with God, in God, and for God.

PRAYER.

CORRECT in me, O Lord, that indolence of mind in which I squander away my time with trifles,

and that uselessness of thought which w
me from the enjoyment of Thy presence
tracts my attention in the time of pray
when I recite my prayers, I cannot alw
of Thee, grant that my distractions may
voluntary, so that, whilst they divert m
they may never withdraw my heart fro
Teach me, O Lord, before prayer, to pre
soul, that, urged by my many necessitie
a desire of pleasing Thee, I may fulfil thi
ant duty with a becoming sense of Th
presence, and of the subject on which I s
from Thy bounty and mercy. Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE JOY OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE

THE good man's glory is the tes
of a good conscience.

Have a good conscience, and the
always have joy.

A good conscience can bear ver
and is very joyful in the midst of
sity.

An evil conscience is always f

unquiet; sweetly shalt thou rest, if thy heart upbraid thee not.

Never rejoice except when thou hast done well.

The wicked never have true joy, nor feel interior peace; for "there is no peace to the wicked," saith the Lord.

And if they say, We are in peace, and there shall no evil come upon us, and who is there shall dare to harm us?

Believe them not; for suddenly the anger of God shall arise, and bring their deeds to nought, and their thoughts shall perish.

To glory in tribulation is not hard to him that loves; for so to glory is to glory in the cross of the Lord.

Short-lived is the glory that is given and received by men.

Sadness ever accompanieth the glory of this world.

The glory of the good is in their own consciences, and *not* in the mouth of men.

The joy of the just is from God and in God, and their rejoicing is in the truth.

He that longeth after true and
ing glory careth not for tempor

And he that seeketh temporal
doth not from his soul despise
himself to have little love for t
is heavenly.

Great tranquillity of heart ha
careth neither for praise nor bla

3. Easily will he be content
peace whose conscience is undef

Thou art not more holy
praised, nor the worse for being

What thou art, that thou art ;
thou be said to be greater than
thee to be.

If thou attend diligently to
art interiorly, thou wilt not re
men say of thee.

Man looketh on the face, but
into the heart.

Man considereth the actions,
weigheth the intentions.

Always to do well, and to es
self of small account, is the
humble soul.

To refuse consolation from any creature is the sign of great purity and of an interior confidence.

4. He that seeketh no outward testimony for himself, sheweth plainly that he hath wholly committed himself to God.

"For not he that commendeth himself," saith blessed Paul, "is approved, but he whom God commendeth."

To walk with God within, and to be bound by no affection from without, is the state of the man of interior life.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

THE peace of a good conscience does not always exclude those troubles which are occasioned by temptations and interior trials; but in all the storms which arise, it keeps the heart submissive and faithful to God; submissive in suffering pain, and faithful in not yielding under it, but in resisting, in fighting, and in neglecting nothing on account of it. Thus it is that a suffering and submissive soul is, according to the royal prophet, an acceptable sacrifice to God, who never rejects a contrite and humble heart, humble from the *experience of its own miseries*, and contrite for *having given cause to God to oblige it to expe-*

rience them. Let us, therefore, form a **and constant resolution not to suffer ourselves to be discouraged, either by our falls, or by our trials, or by the experience of our miseries to humble ourselves before God, at the sight of our wretchedness; to crave pardon for the wrongs we have committed through not resisting, which we ought to have done, the enemy of our salvation; to punish ourselves immediately for the commission of some act of mortification; and, after that, to remain in peace; for a good conscience is that which is either exempt from sin by fidelity, or cleansed from it by repentance.**

PRAYER.

Thou knowest, O Lord, to how many sin-lurements, interior trials, and dangers we are exposed, both from our natural and violent propensities to evil, our unceasing repugnance to God, and the assaults of temptation. How shall we be able to resist so many and such powerful enemies, bent as they are upon our destruction? Thou in Thy bounty assist us not? It is to Thee we raise up our hearts and our minds, in Thee we look for succour to keep us from yielding to temptation, to deliver us from the great evils of all evils, sin, and to preserve us from perishing everlastingly. Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE LOVE OF JESUS ABOVE ALL THINGS.

BLESSED is he who understandeth what it is to love Jesus, and to despise himself for the sake of Jesus.

We must leave what is beloved for the sake of the Beloved; for Jesus will be loved alone and above all things.

The love of things created is deceitful and inconstant; the love of Jesus is faithful and enduring.

He that clingeth to the creature shall fall with its falling.

He that embraceth Jesus shall be firmly rooted for ever.

Love Him, and keep Him for thy friend, who, when all forsake, will not leave thee, nor suffer thee to perish finally.

Sooner or later thou must be separated from all, whether *thou wilt* or no.

2. *In life and in death keep thyself near to Jesus, and entrust thyself to His fidel-*

ity, who alone can help thee when all others fail.

The nature of thy Beloved is such, that He will not admit of a rival; but He will have thy heart for Himself alone, and sit as king upon His own throne.

If thou couldst empty thy heart of every creature, Jesus would willingly make His dwelling with thee.

Whatsoever thou reposest in men, out of Jesus, thou wilt find to be well nigh lost.

Trust not, nor lean upon a reed full of wind. "For all flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof shall fade like the flower of grass."

3. Thou wilt soon be deceived, if thou regard only the external appearance of men. Indeed, if thou seek in others thy comfort and thy profit, thou wilt more often meet with loss.

If in all things thou seekest Jesus, truly thou shalt find Jesus; but if thou seek *thyself*, thou shalt find *thyself* also, but to *thy own ruin*.

For if a man seek not Jesus, he doth himself more harm than the whole world and all his enemies can do him.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

APPLY thy whole mind to know Jesus Christ, thy whole heart to love Him, and all thy care to follow Him, since for this alone thou art a Christian. What difficulty canst thou have in loving a Man-God, who assumed humanity only for love of thee, and for thy salvation? Be then resolved to study and to contemplate Him in all His actions, to penetrate into His designs, to enter into His dispositions and the purport of His mysteries; and endeavour to do, to suffer, and to live as He did; for the whole merit of a Christian in this life consists in conformity in all things with Jesus Christ; and, in the next, it will constitute his never-ending happiness. If he endeavour to participate here in the humble and suffering life of his Redeemer, he will hereafter partake of His glorious immortality.

PRAYER.

As, O Jesus, I can have no pretensions to heaven but through Thy virtues and merit, I beseech Thee to inspire me with an ardent desire of *knowing and following* Thee. Grant, O *my most amiable Saviour*, that I may follow Thy *maxims, practise Thy virtues*, and form myself

upon Thy example, that my resemblance may make me worthy of Thy love, and to find grace in the sight of Thy heavenly Father who loves us only in proportion as we resemble Thee. Help me then to become like Thy sentiments, and conformed to Thy will. Grant that, after Thy example, I may become meek, humble, patient, cheerful, and submissive in all things to Thy Father. I hope that, presenting myself to Him as Thou hast presented Thyself, I shall not be rejected, and that I may obtain the blessing which I desire to have for Thee. Thy love for me, and my ultimate happiness. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF FAMILIAR FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS.

WHEN Jesus is present, all is easy; nothing seems difficult; but when He is absent, every thing is hard.

When Jesus speaketh not to us, consolation is little worth; but if He speak only one word, we feel great comfort.

Did not Mary Magdalen inquire for Him up from the place where she

Martha said to her, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee?"

Happy hour, when Jesus calleth thee from tears to joy of spirit.

How dry and hard art thou without Jesus! How foolish and vain, if thou desire any thing out of Jesus!

Is not this a greater loss to thee than if thou shouldst lose the whole world?

2. What can the world give thee without Jesus?

To be without Jesus is a grievous hell; to be with Jesus a sweet paradise.

If Jesus be with thee, no foe can harm thee.

Whoever findeth Jesus findeth a good treasure, yea, a good above every good.

And he that loseth Jesus loseth much, yea more than the whole world.

He that liveth without Jesus is in wretched poverty; and he who is with Jesus is most rich.

3. It is a great art to know how to converse with Jesus; and to know how to keep Jesus is great wisdom.

Be humble and peaceable, and Jesus will be with thee.

Be devout and calm, and Jesus will abide with thee.

Thou mayest soon drive away Jesus, and lose His grace, if thou wilt turn aside after outward things.

And if thou drive Him from thee and lose Him, to whom wilt thou fly? and whom, then, wilt thou seek for thy friend?

Without a friend, thou canst not live happily; and if Jesus be not a friend to thee above all, thou wilt indeed be sad and desolate.

Thou dost foolishly, therefore, to trust in any other, or to rejoice in any other.

We ought rather to choose to have the whole world against us than to offend Jesus.

Of all, therefore, that are dear to thee, let Jesus be thy special beloved.

4. Let all be loved for Jesus' sake, but Jesus for His own sake.

Jesus Christ alone is singly to be loved; *for He alone is found good and faithful above all friends.*

For His sake, and in Him, let enemies as well as friends be dear to thee ; and for all these thou must pray to Him, that all may know and love Him.

Never desire to be singly praised or beloved ; for this belongeth to God alone, who hath none like unto Himself.

Neither desire that any one's heart should be much taken up with thee ; nor do thou be much taken up with the love of any one ; but let Jesus be in thee, and in every good man.

5. Be pure and free interiorly, without being entangled by any creature.

Thou must be naked, and bear a pure heart towards God, if thou wilt be free, and experience how sweet the Lord is.

And, indeed, thou wilt never attain to *it*, unless thou be prevented and drawn

His grace, that so thou mayest be led to Him alone, when thou hast cast and dismissed all others.

For when the grace of God cometh to *us*, then is he powerful for all things ; when it departeth, then is he poor

and weak, and left only as scourgings.

In these circumstances, he be dejected nor despair; but main, awaiting the will of God for the glory of Jesus Christ shall befall him; because, after cometh summer, after the day returneth, after the storm great calm.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

It is difficult to live without some we can open our hearts and confide But to whom can we better disclose to Jesus, who, more than all others the most faithful, the most constant, worthy of our confidence. Seek, Him alone thy consolation and thy open thy heart incessantly before Him course to Him in all thy troubles discouraged if He seem to hide His for this is only the effect of His thee, and the trial of thy fidelity to Pray, entreat, and conjure Him in His assist thee; and be assured that, soon thou wilt experience the effects of His Preserve thy heart free for Him,

were : from every creature ; love Him for the sake of
 1st : His own infinite perfections ; and love all things
 2d : else only as they lead thee to Him and to His
 3d : love. Let pains, injuries, sorrows, and humiliations
 4th : become as welcome to thee as they were to
 5th : Jesus Christ ; and let the esteem and the praises
 6th : of men be to thee objects of dread and contempt,
 7th : because they were so to Him. In a word, ac-
 8th : custom thyself to know Him, to speak to Him,
 9th : to love Him, and to seek to please Him in all
 10th : things, that, living thus in the exercise of His
 11th : love, the last motion of thy heart may be an act
 12th : of the love of thy dearest Redeemer.

PRAYER.

As Thy love for me, O Jesus, is a prevenient love, and as Thou makest me worthy of Thy love, by first loving me, attract and gain my heart, and confirm it in Thy love. Grant that, detached from all things, and uninfluenced by the allurements of self-love, I may breathe only Thy love ; that I may be engaged with Thee alone, and attentive only to Thee, and neither seek nor love any thing but Thee alone, in all things. Be Thou, my most amiable Saviour, the reigning object and sovereign good of my soul. Grant that, animated by Thy spirit, formed upon Thy example, faithful to Thy graces, and obedient to Thy orders, I may live for Thee, from Thee, and like Thee, in order to commence that occu

pation on earth which I hope to continue in heaven, which is to possess and to love The Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE WANT OF ALL CONSOLATION.

It is not hard to despise all human consolation when we have divine.

But it is much, and very much, to be able to forego all comfort, both human and divine, and to be willing to bear this inferior banishment for God's honour, and to seek oneself in nothing, nor to think of one's own merit.

What so great thing is it if thou be cheerful and devout when grace comes. This hour is desirable to all.

He rides pleasantly enough who is carried by the grace of God.

And what wonder if he feel no weight who is borne up by the Almighty, as led on by the Sovereign Guide?

2. We love to have something to c

and it is with difficulty that a man
 ff himself.

oly Martyr Lawrence, with his
 vercame the world, because he
 whatever seemed delightful in
 l; and, for the love of Christ, he
 the High Priest of God, Sixtus,
 exceedingly loved, to be taken
 n him.

rcame, therefore, the love of man
 ve of the Creator; and instead
 isolation he had in man, he made
 her of God's good pleasure.

thou also learn to part with an
 and beloved friend for the love

ke it not to heart when thou art
 by a friend, knowing that at last
 all be separated one from an-

an must have a great and a long
 ithin himself before he can learn
 overcome *himself*, and to direct
affection towards God.

man stands upon himself,

he easily inclines after hum
tions.

But a true lover of Christ
gent pursuer of virtue, does n
upon comforts, nor seek su
delights, but rather prefers ha
and to sustain severe labour

4. Therefore, when God gi
consolation, receive it with th
but know that it is God's free
merit of thine.

Be not lifted up, be not ov
vainly presume, but rather b
humble for this gift, more c
and fearful in all thy action
hour will pass away, and tem
low.

When consolation shall be
from thee, do not presently
- with humility and patience
heavenly visitation, since God
restore to thee more abund
tion.

*This is no new nor strang
to those who have known the*

for among the great Saints and ancient Prophets there has often been this kind of vicissitude.

5. Hence there was one who, when grace was with him, exclaimed, "I said in my abundance, I shall not be moved for ever."

But when grace was withdrawn, he tells what he experienced in himself; saying, "Thou hast turned away Thy face from me, and I became troubled."

Yet even then he despaireth not, but more earnestly prayeth to the Lord, and saith, "Unto Thee, O Lord, will I cry; and to my God will I make supplication."

At length he receiveth the fruit of his prayer, and witnesseth that he was heard, saying, "The Lord hath heard, and hath had mercy on me; the Lord hath become my helper."

But in what way? "Thou hast turned," he saith, "my mourning into joy, and Thou hast encompassed me with gladness."

If it hath been thus with great Saints, we that are weak and poor must not be

est him early in the morning, and sudden Thou tryest him."

6. Wherein then can I hope, or must I put my trust, but in God's mercy alone, and in the hope of his grace.

For whether I have with me good or devout brethren, or faithful friends, holy books, or beautiful treatises, or canticles and hymns, all these but little, give me but little relish, when forsaken by grace and left in my poverty.

No Saint was ever so sublimely rapt and illuminated as not to be tempted sooner or later.

For he is not worthy the sublime contemplation of God, who has not, for God's sake, been exercised with some tribulation.

For preceding temptation is usually a sign of ensuing consolation.

For heavenly comfort is promised to such as have been proved by temptation.

"To him that shall overcome," saith the Lord, "I will give to eat of the tree of life."

8. Now divine consolation is given, that a man may the better be able to support adversities.

And temptation followeth, that he may not be elated by the good.

The devil sleepeth not, neither is the flesh yet dead; therefore thou must not cease to prepare thyself for the battle; for on the right hand and on the left are enemies *that never rest*.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

As we approach to God by faith, the senses, and as faith of itself is secure, we must not be surprised if we experience dryness and desolation, sometimes consolation and joy. All receiving consolation with humility, reporting desolation with fortitude. *Silver and gold*, says the wise man, *the fire*; and souls, before they can thy of being admitted to an intimacy with God, are tried in the furnace of painful and humiliating tribulation; then, thy heart under the all-powerful God, and bear with patience the Lord, who, by the temptations which makes us little, humble, and dependent on Him, and would have us, in imitation of the Martyrs, love Him in suffering, suffer with Him, and honour His greatness by the destruction of self-love.

PRAYER.

How happy are we, O Jesus, when we receive no pleasure nor satisfaction but in Thee. But how much more so when, although we receive neither consolation nor delight nor gratification in Thy service, we still persevere in our spiritual journey, all disgust, persevere in our spiritual journey faithful to Thy grace! It is thus

prove that we love Thee for Thyself; that we seek not human comfort, but to please Thee; and that, dying to self-satisfaction, which is the natural life of the heart, we make it our delight to please Thee, and our true satisfaction to sacrifice our own for Thy love. It is just, O Lord, that I should prefer Thy holy will to my own inclinations, and that I should serve Thee more for Thyself than from any selfish motive. This I desire, O Jesus; but do Thou give me courage to accomplish it, and grant that henceforth I may prefer submission to Thy good pleasure before every other consolation. Amen.

CHAPTER X.

OF GRATITUDE FOR THE GRACE OF GOD.

WHY seekest thou repose, since thou art born to labour?

Dispose thyself to patience, rather than to consolations; and to carrying the cross, rather than to gladness.

For who is there amongst those of the world *that would not* willingly receive *comfort and spiritual joy*, if he could obtain it at all times?

Spiritual consolations, indeed all the delights of the world and of the flesh.

For all worldly delights are or impure; but spiritual delights are delightful and honourable, spring from virtue, and are God into pure minds.

But these divine consolations can always enjoy when he will, the time of temptation is not long.

2. But what very much opposes heavenly visits is, a false liberty and a great confidence in oneself.

God doth well in giving the consolation, but man doth ill in turning it all to God with thanksgiving.

And this is the reason why the grace cannot flow in us, because we are ungrateful to the Giver, nor do we turn all to the fountain-head.

For grace will be always given to that duly returns thanks; and *wont* to be given to the humble, *taken* away from the proud.

I would not have any such consolation as robbeth me of compunction ; nor wish to have such contemplation as eth to pride.

For all that is high is not holy ; nor is every pleasant thing good ; nor every dear pure ; nor is every thing that is dear us pleasing to God.

I willingly accept of that grace which always maketh me more humble and fearful, and more ready to renounce myself.

He that hath been taught by the gift of grace, and instructed by the chastisement of its withdrawal, will not dare to attribute any thing of good to himself, but will rather acknowledge himself to be poor and naked.

Give to God what is His, and ascribe to thyself what is thine ; that is, give thanks to God for His grace ; but as to thyself, be sensible that nothing is to be attributed to thee but sin, and the punishment *sin deserveth*.

4. *Put thyself always in the lowest place, and the highest shall be given thee*

eyes; and the more glorious they
more humble are they in themself.

Full of truth and heavenly glo
are not covetous of vain-glory.

Being grounded and established
they can by no means be proud.

And they who attribute to Go
soever good they have received, &
glory from one another, but the
which is from God alone; and the
above all things that God may be
in themselves, and in all the Sai
to this they are always tending.

5 Be grateful then for the la

for thee. For that is not little which is given by the most high God.

Yea, though He give punishment and stripes, it ought to be acceptable; for whatever He suffereth to befall us, He always doth it for our salvation.

He that desireth to retain the grace of God, let him be thankful for grace when it is given, and patient when it is withdrawn.

Let him pray, that it may return; let him be cautious and humble, lest he lose it.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

Do not exalt thyself on account of the gifts of God, which are often a help to thy weakness, always the effect of His bounty, and ordinarily above thy deserts. When, in the act of offending Him, thou perceivest thy heart touched at the sight of thy ingratitude and infidelity, thou oughtest to humble thyself and be confounded before Him at seeing Him so full of goodness and thyself so replete with wickedness.

Penetrated with a lively sorrow for having offended God, who seeks thee even when thou art fleeing away from Him, and loads thee with His graces, even when thou provest thyself un-

worthy of them, return to Him by
ance; ask pardon for thy fault, and
avenging Him by punishing thyself

PRAYER.

O God, whose bounty is infinite
mercies are proportioned to our mis-
us not to be so ungrateful as to forg-
fits, nor so unfaithful as to become
Thy graces. We acknowledge that
only to be abandoned by Thee, we r-
hatred and eternal torments; but
Thee, O Saviour, not to deal with
to our deserts, but according to the
Thy tender mercies, which Thou art
of imparting to us. Amen.

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE SMALL NUMBER OF THE LOV-
CROSS OF JESUS.

JESUS hath now many lovers
heavenly kingdom, but few bea-
Cross.

He hath many that are desir-
solation, but few of tribulation

He finds many companions of His table, but few of his abstinence.

All desire to rejoice with Him, but few are willing to endure any thing for His sake.

Many follow Jesus to the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking the chalice of His Passion.

Many reverence His miracles, but few follow the ignominy of His Cross.

Many love Jesus as long as they meet with no adversity ; many praise Him and bless Him as long as they receive some consolations from Him.

But if Jesus hide Himself, and leave them for a little while, they either murmur or fall into excessive dejection.

2. But they that love Jesus for Jesus' sake, and not for the sake of some consolation of their own, bless him no less in tribulation and anguish of heart than in the greatest consolation.

And if He should never give them consolation, yet would they always praise Him, and always give Him thanks.

... WHO ARE EVER SEEKING
tions?

Do not they prove themselves rather lovers of themselves than of others who are always thinking of their advantage and gain?

Where shall we find a man that is willing to serve God disinterestedly?

4. Seldom do we find any one equal as to be stripped of all things.

For who shall be able to find that is truly poor in spirit, and free of attachment to all created things whose value is (as of things that are

And if he have great virtue and very fervent devotion, there is still much wanting to him, namely, the one thing which is supremely necessary for him.

What is that? That having left all things else, he leave also himself, and wholly go out of himself, and retain nothing of self-love.

And when he shall have done all things which he knows he ought to do, let him think that he has done nothing.

5. Let him not make great account of that which may appear much to be esteemed; but let him in truth acknowledge himself to be an unprofitable servant; as the Truth himself has said, "When ye shall have done all things that have been commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants."

Then may he be truly poor in spirit, and may say with the Psalmist, "I am alone and poor."

Yet is there no one richer than such a man, none more powerful, none more free; who knoweth how to leave himself

and all things, and to put himself in the very lowest place.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

How many Christians adore Jesus, poor in the manger, and suffering upon the Cross, who will neither submit to privation, nor endure tribulation for His sake ! Yet He was born, and lived, and died in poverty and sufferings, to teach us to renounce all things, and to bear our crosses with patience ; to teach us, by His preaching and example, the virtues necessary for salvation, and to merit for us the grace to practise them. What will it avail thee to adore Jesus Christ, thy Saviour and thy model, if thou dost not imitate Him and place thy whole confidence in Him ? Take, then, the generous resolution of renouncing all things by depriving the senses of all dangerous or unprofitable gratifications ; by discarding from thy mind all vanity and self-complacency, and all malignity in condemning others ; and by stripping thy heart of all attachment to self-satisfaction and self-seeking, on all occasions. Carry this interior poverty and deprivation even so far as to renounce thy own will in all things, to desire only, and to accomplish, the will of God. It is *by thus giving up thy whole self to God that thou wilt constitute Him the sole master and proprietor of thy heart, and by stripping thyself*

of all things here, make Him thy inheritance for ever hereafter.

PRAYER.

I CONCEIVE, O my Saviour, an exalted idea of the bereavement Thou requirest of a Christian heart, since Thou dost oblige it to yield itself up entirely to Thee, and to substitute Thy love in place of the love of itself. But how far am I from practising it, how incapable of it of myself! Help me, O Lord, to renounce and to die to myself in all things. Suffer not my heart to seek itself, since Thou designest it to be entirely Thine. Grant that whenever it is tempted to live for, or to seek itself in any thing, it may immediately renounce and die to itself, to live only in and for Thee. Then may I say with Thy apostle: Jesus Christ is my life, and it is gain for me to die to all, that I may live only in Him, and by Him, and for Him. Amen.

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE ROYAL ROAD OF THE HOLY CROSS.

To many this seemeth a hard saying:
"Deny thyself, take up thy cross, and follow Jesus."

But it will be much harder to hear that last word : " Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

For they who now love to hear and follow the word of the Cross shall not then fear the sentence of eternal condemnation.

This sign of the Cross shall be in heaven when the Lord shall come to judge.

Then all the servants of the Cross, who in their lifetime have conformed themselves to Him that was crucified, shall come to Christ their Judge with great confidence.

2. Why, then, art thou afraid to take up thy cross, which leadeth to the kingdom?

In the Cross is salvation; in the Cross is life; in the Cross is protection from enemies.

In the Cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness; in the Cross is strength of *mind*; in the Cross is joy of spirit.

In the Cross is height of virtue; in the Cross is perfection of sanctity.

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There is no health of soul, nor hope of eternal life, but in the Cross.

Take up, therefore, thy cross, and follow Jesus, and thou shalt go into life everlasting.

He is gone before thee, carrying His cross, and He died for thee upon the cross, that thou mayest also bear thy cross, and love to die on the cross.

Because if thou die with Him, thou shalt also live with Him; and if thou art His companion in suffering, thou shalt also be His companion in glory.

3. Behold in the Cross all doth consist, and all lieth in our dying; and there is no other way to life and to true interior peace, but the way of the holy Cross, and of daily mortification.

Go where thou wilt, seek what thou wilt, and thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below, than the way of the holy Cross.

Dispose and order all things according as thou wilt, and as seems best to thee; and thou wilt still find something

to suffer, either willingly or
ly; and so thou shalt always
Cross.

For either thou shalt feel p
body, or sustain in thy soul trib
spirit.

4. Sometimes thou shalt be
by God; at other times thou sh
flicted by thy neighbour; and
more, thou shalt often be a trou
self.

Neither canst thou be del
eased by any remedy or comfor
long as it shall please God, t
bear it.

For God willeth that thou les
fer tribulation without comfort, a
submit thyself to Him, and bec
humble by tribulation.

No man hath so heartfelt a
the Passion of Christ as he wh
hath been to suffer like things.

The Cross, therefore, is alwa
and every where awaiteth thee

Thou canst not escape it, w

thou runnest ; for wheresoever thou goest thou carriest thyself with thee, and shalt always find thyself.

Turn thyself upwards or turn thyself downwards ; turn thyself inward or turn thyself outward ; every where thou shalt find the Cross.

And every where thou must of necessity hold fast patience, if thou desirest inward peace, and wouldst merit an eternal crown.

5. If thou carry the Cross willingly, it will carry thee, and bring thee to thy desired end, namely, to that place where there will be an end of suffering, though here there will be no end.

If thou carry it unwillingly, thou makest it a burden to thee, and loadest thyself the more, and nevertheless thou must bear it.

If thou fling away one cross, without doubt thou wilt find another, and perhaps a heavier.

6. *Dost thou think to escape that which no mortal ever could avoid ?* What Saint

ever was in the world without and tribulation ?

For even our Lord Jesus Christ himself was not for one hour of His life without the anguish of His Passion, "hooved," said He, "that Christ may suffer, and rise from the dead, and enter into His glory."

And how dost thou seek any other than this royal way, which is the way of the holy Cross.

7. The whole life of Christ was a life of suffering and a martyrdom ; and dost thou seek for thyself rest and joy ?

Thou erreth, thou erreth, if thou think aught else than to suffer tribulation. For this whole mortal life is full of tribulation, and every where marked with suffering.

And the higher a person is in the spiritual life, the heavier crosses shall he meet with ; because the pain of tribulation and punishment increaseth in proportion to the love.

8. Yet such a one, thus afflicted, is not without some re-

lation ; because he is sensible of the very great profit he reaps by bearing the Cross.

For whilst he willingly resigns himself to it, all the burden of tribulation is converted into an assured hope of comfort from God.

And the more the flesh is brought down by affliction, the more is the spirit strengthened by interior grace.

And sometimes he gaineth such strength through affection to tribulation and adversity, by his love of conformity to the Cross of Christ, as not to be willing to be without suffering and affliction ; because such a one believeth himself to be so much the more acceptable to God, the more and more grievous things he shall have endured for His sake.

This is not man's power, but the grace of Christ ; which doth and can effect such great things in frail flesh, and that what it naturally abhors and flies, even this, through *fervour of spirit*, it now embraces and loves.

9. *To bear the Cross, to love the Cross ;*

to chastise the body and by subjection; to fly honours, to suffer insults, to despise oneself, to be despised; to bear all adversities, losses, and to desire no prosperity of this world;—all this is not according to natural inclination.

If thou lookest unto thyself, do nothing of this sort of thing.

But if thou confidest in thyself, strength will be given to thee, and the world and the flesh made subject to thee.

Neither shalt thou fear the devil, if thou art armed with the Cross of Christ.

10. Set thyself, then, like a faithful servant of Christ, to follow the Cross of thy Lord, for He who was crucified for thee.

Prepare thyself to suffer adversities, and divers evils, in this life; for so it will be with thee, *thou art*, and so indeed wilt thou *wheresoever* thou hide thyself.

It must be so, and there is no remedy against tribulation and sorrow, but to bear them patiently.

Drink of the chalice of thy Lord lovingly, if thou desirest to be His friend, and to have part with Him.

Leave consolations to God, to do with them as best pleaseth Him.

But be ready on thy part to bear tribulations, and account them the greatest consolations; for the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, although thou alone couldst suffer them all.

11. When thou shalt arrive thus far, that tribulation shall be sweet to thee, and thou shalt relish it for the love of Christ, then think that it is well with thee, for thou hast found a paradise upon earth.

As long as suffering is grievous to thee, and thou seekest to fly from it, so long shall it be ill with thee; and the [desire of] *flying from tribulation* shall pursue thee every where.

12. If thou set thyself to what thou

oughtest, that is, to suffer and will quickly be better with thee, shalt find peace.

Although thou shouldst have to the third heaven with St. Paul art not thereby secured that thou suffer no adversity: "I," said Jesus shew him how great things he need for My name."

To suffer, therefore, is what avails if thou art resolved to love Jesus constantly to serve Him.

13. Would to God thou wende to suffer something for the name how great glory would remain to self! how great joy would it be to Saints of God! and how great to thy neighbour!

All recommend patience, but, few are there that desire to suffer.

With good reason oughtest thou to suffer a little for Christ many suffer greater things for the name.

14. Know for certain that thou *lead a dying life*; and the name

dieth to himself, the more doth he begin to live unto God.

No man is fit to comprehend heavenly things who hath not resigned himself to suffer adversities for Christ.

Nothing is more acceptable to God, nothing more salutary for thee in this world, than to suffer willingly for Christ.

And if thou couldst make choice, thou oughtest to prefer to suffer adversities for Christ, than to be delighted with much consolation; because thus thou wouldst more resemble Christ, and be more likened to all the Saints.

For our merit, and the advancement of our state, consists not in having many sweetnesses and consolations; but rather in bearing great afflictions and tribulations.

If, indeed, there had been any thing better, and more beneficial to man's salvation, than suffering, Christ certainly would have *shewed it by word and example.*

For He manifestly exhorts both His

disciples that followed Him, and all desire to follow Him, to bear the cross, saying, "If any one will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

So that when we have read and search all, let this be the final conclusion, "through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God."

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

CAN we read, believe, and ponder seriously the wonderful advantages of the Cross, and the merit of suffering, as here described, and not desire to suffer, to receive crosses from the hands of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to submit to endure whatever He pleases, and as much as He pleases, since to suffer in this manner, is absolutely requisite for salvation, and is the most tender and efficacious effect of the goodness of God to us, who will not spare us the pains of time, but He may spare us those of eternity? It is the visible character of the predestinate, and according to St. Paul, consists in our resemblance to Jesus Christ, an humble, suffering, and persecuted God; it is to render ourselves worthy of *His* life of glory by participating in *His* suffering; it is to efface the punishment

our sins by perfect repentance ; it is to gain the heart of Jesus Christ, merit His love, avenge Him, and punish ourselves, honour Him by our destruction, and prefer His good pleasure before our own satisfaction. Shall not all this console thee under affliction, and animate thee to bear it with becoming resignation ? Say, then, in the time of suffering, in order not to fail : " Hell, which I have deserved, is something more horrible than any thing I can now endure ; my Saviour has suffered much more for me ; and heaven is worth infinitely more than I can undergo."

PRAYER.

PENETRATE my heart, O Jesus, with these sentiments when Thou sendest me pains, and support me in all my afflictions ; for, alas ! Thou knowest how naturally I hate and fly from the Cross, although I am persuaded that it was by the Cross Thou didst save me, and that I cannot gain salvation, nor enter into heaven, but by the way of Calvary. Inspire me with that patience, that strength, and that courage which Thou didst impart to Thy martyrs : and since I cannot better evince my love and gratitude towards Thee than by suffering for Thee, nor render myself more worthy of Thy grace and glory than by carrying the Cross, *vouchsafe to support me when sinking under its burden by the desire of pleasing Thee, and the hope of eternal happiness.* Amen.

Book Third.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE INTERNAL DISCOURSE OF CHRIST
WITH THE FAITHFUL SOUL.

I WILL hear what the Lord God
saith in me.

Happy is the soul which heareth
the Lord speaking within her, and
from His mouth the word of comfort.

Happy ears, which receive the
soundings of the divine whisper, and
take notice of the whisperings of this

Happy ears, indeed, which hearken
unto the voice that soundeth within
to Truth itself teaching within.

Happy eyes, which are shut to
things without, but intent on things internal.

Happy they who penetrate into
internal things, and endeavour to pre-

more and more by daily exercises
receiving of heavenly secrets.

Y they who rejoice to be wholly
in God, and who shake off every
impediment.

Consider these things, O my soul, and
the doors of thy sensual desires;
thou mayest hear what the Lord thy
maketh within thee.

As saith thy Beloved: I am thy
peace, and thy life.

Thyself with Me, and thou shalt
ce.

O all transitory things: seek the

are all things temporal but se-
nares? and what avail all created
if thou be forsaken by the Creator?
off, then, all earthly things, and
thyself pleasing to thy Creator, and
to Him, that so thou mayest lay
true happiness.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

THE soul disposes itself to hear what the speaks to its interior, when, devoted to retirement, silence, and prayer, loving to be alone with its God, and seeking Him in itself, by a lively reverential faith, it is attentive and faithful to the motions of His grace, to the interior influence of His presence, and to the attractions of love. Thus, to maintain a spirit of recollection and of faithful love, ever to keep the mind attentive to the will of God, and the heart resolved to accomplish it, is effectually to dispose ourselves to hear God, and to receive the most intimate communications of His Spirit. God speaks incessantly by His inspirations, and the holy Spirit imparts to us, to engage us to die to ourselves and to live only to Him. But either we do not hearken to Him, or it is only in a careless manner. When the soul is wholly given to its senses, agitated by the passions, and entertained up with exterior things, it is itself incapable and unworthy of the operations of God. It should therefore resolve to think and to love but little to creatures, to love silence and retirement, to nourish our minds with God's precepts and our hearts with His love, and to do all for Him and in His sight, if we would become better men, living in God, and for God, as Christians should do who would be saved.

PRAYER.

and with the demands of my senses, the my passions, and the inefficacy of my come to Thee, O Jesus, earnestly to hee to recall my mind and my heart to re, which is Thy presence and Thy love. longer endure to live without Thee, my an no longer remain a fugitive from nce, nor banish myself from Thy heart. frequently do my soul and the objects round me demand, *Where is thy God?* ng speaks to me of Thee, yet nothing to Thee. Thou art within me, and I in exterior things, which dissipate my remove me to a distance from Thee. f my soul! the Centre of my heart! me and Sovereign Object of my mind! ll I see what I now believe! when shall what I love! Grant that the moment ence strikes my mind, all within my y fall prostrate and yield entirely to men.

CHAPTER II.

THAT TRUTH SPEAKETH WITHIN US WITHOUT
OF WORDS.

SPEAK, Lord, for Thy servant heareth
I am Thy servant ; give me understanding
that I may know Thy testimonies.

Incline my heart to the words of Thy
mouth ; let Thy speech distil as the dew

Heretofore the children of Israel
said to Moses, Speak thou to us, and we
will hear : let not the Lord speak to us,
lest we die.

It is not thus, O Lord, it is not
by prayer, but rather, with the prophet Samuel,
I humbly and earnestly entreat,
Lord, for Thy servant heareth.

Let not Moses, nor any of the Prophets
speak to me ; but speak Thou rather, O
Lord God, the Inspirer and Enlightener
of all the Prophets ; for Thou alone
canst perfectly instruct them,
but they, without Thee, will attain to nothing.

2. They may indeed sound forth words,
if they give not the spirit.

Most beautifully do they speak ; but if
you be silent, they inflame not the heart.
They give the letter, but Thou disclo-
st the sense.

They publish the mysteries, but Thou
unlockest the meaning of the things sig-
ned.

They declare the commandments, but
you enablest us to fulfil them.

They shew the way, but Thou givest
strength to walk in it.

What they can do is only from without,
Thou instructest and enlightenest the
heart.

They water outwardly, but Thou givest
increase.

They cry aloud in words, but Thou im-
partest understanding to the hearing.

3. Let not then Moses speak to me,
Thou, O Lord my God, the eternal
Truth, lest I die and prove fruitless, if I
be admonished only outwardly, and not
renewed within.

Lest it be to my conde-
the word be heard and
known and not loved, beli-
observed.

Speak, then, O Lord, for
heareth; for Thou hast the
nal life.

Speak to me, that it may
fort to my soul, and the a-
my whole life; and also t-
and glory, and everlasting h-

PRACTICAL REFLECTIO

God speaks to the understandi-
of His Spirit, and to the heart l-
spirations. All that the Prophe-
Word of God, all the truths whi-
nounce to us, cannot enlighten th-
nor touch the heart, if God Hime-
us by the motions of His grac-
therefore entreat the Lord to sp-
rior, while we exteriorly attend t-
truths, for fear that hearing th-
and not keeping it, knowing H-
not following them, conscious of
doing it, we should become mor-
pable in His sight.

PRAYER.

SAK to me, O Lord, speak in such a manner
y soul that I may hear and obey Thee.
known to me Thy designs for my salva-
and enable me to execute them. Teach me
ll Christians, O Jesus, what Thou art to us,
what we ought to be to Thee. Instruct us
sacred maxims of Thy Gospel, and induce
practise them. For what will it avail us
lieve Thy heavenly doctrines, if we endeav-
ot to follow them, and to live, as well as
lieve, as becometh Christians! O eternal
l of the Father, by which He spoke, and all
s were made, speak to my soul, say to it, I
y salvation. Work in me to will and to
nd consummate my salvation. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

**THE WORDS OF GOD ARE TO BE HEARD WITH
ILITY, AND THAT MANY WEIGH THEM NOT.**

on, hear My words, words most sweet,
ling all the learning of philosophers,
of the wise men of this world.
words are spirit and life, and not to

be estimated according to his
tion.

They are not to be drawn
vain complacency, but are to
silence, and to be received
mility and great affection.

2. And I said, Blessed is thou,
Thou, O Lord, shalt instruct
teach him Thy law; that
give him rest from the evil
he may not be desolate upon

I (saith the Lord) have
Prophets from the beginning
till now I cease not to speak

But many are deaf and have
voice.

The greater number listen
ingly to the world than to God
readier to follow the desires
than the good pleasure of God

The world promiseth things
and of small value, and is
great eagerness; I promise
excellent and everlasting, and
hearts remain torpid.

3. Who is there that serveth and obeyeth Me in all things, with that great care with which the world and its lords are served? Be ashamed, O Sidon, saith the sea.

And if thou ask the cause, hear wherefore.

For a scanty sustenance, men run a great way; for eternal life, many will scarce lift foot once from the ground.

A petty gain is sought after; for a single coin sometimes men shamefully quarrel: for men will brave toil day and night, yea, for some mere trifle or a slight promise.

4. But, alas, for an unchangeable good, for an inestimable reward, for the highest honour and never-ending glory, they are loath to undergo a little fatigue.

Blush, then, thou slothful, querulous servant, that they are actually more ready to labour for death than thou for life.

They rejoice more in vanity than thou *in the truth*.

Sometimes, indeed, they are disap-

pointed of their hopes ; but My deceiveth no man, nor sendet empty him that trusteth in Me.

What I have promised, I will do what I have said, I will make good only a man continue to the end for My love.

I am the Rewarder of all the good, the mighty Prover of all the device.

5. Write My words in thy heart, think diligently on them ; for this shall be very necessary in the time of visitation. —

What thou understandest not, when thou readest, thou shalt know in the time of visitation.

I am accustomed to visit My people in two manner of ways, namely, by rebuke and by consolation.

And I daily read to them two books, one to rebuke their vices, and the other to exhort them to the increase of good.

He that hath My words, and heareth them, hath One who shall judge him in the last day.

A PRAYER,

TO IMPLORE THE GRACE OF DEVOTION.

6. O Lord my God, Thou art all my good; and who am I, that I should dare to speak to Thee?

I am Thy most poor servant, and a wretched little worm, much more poor and contemptible than I can conceive or dare express.

Yet remember, O Lord, that I am nothing; I have nothing, and can do nothing.

Thou alone art good, just, and holy; Thou canst do all things; Thou givest all things; Thou fillest all things; leaving only the sinner empty.

Remember Thy tender mercies, and fill my heart with Thy grace, Thou who wilt not that Thy works should be void.

7. How can I support myself in this wretched life, unless Thy mercy and grace strengthen me?

*Turn not away Thy face from me, delay
Thy visitation, withdraw not Thy*

comfort, lest my soul become without water to Thee.

O Lord, teach me to do Thy will me to converse worthily and humbly in Thy sight; for Thou art my God, Thou knowest me in the Truth, and Thou know me before the world was made, before I was born in the world.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

It is astonishing to witness how much men undertake, urged on by vain and deceitful hopes, to obtain temporal and perishable goods, and how very little they do to obtain spiritual and eternal rewards, though encouraged by a solid and certain hope founded upon the word of God which never fails. The prospect of interest, of a certain hope of riches, animates every man, enhances every pleasure, dries up every sorrow, lightens every labour; and we think we are well repaid for our trouble when we have acquired the honour, the pleasure, or the wealth we had in view. The hope of heaven, the prospect of eternal happiness, which is maintained by patience and good works, animates not, it neither supports nor consoles us. *Men are as much cast down and discouraged by the thought of gaining heaven by patie*

ugh we esteemed it of no value. Whence this? It is because we are too much attached to things present, and too indifferent about things to come. Our hope is faint because faith is weak.

PRAYER.

AT confusion for me, O Lord, that I should myself so much trouble to please the world, gratify my passions, and take so little to satisfy Thy justice by works of penance, goodness by punctuality in the discharge of duties! Alas! why do I not undergo as for Thee as for myself? Why is not my love to please Thee as fervent as my eagerness to satisfy myself? Change, O Lord, change the desires and inclinations of my heart. Take Thou away self within me, and grant that my love for Thee may be as ardent to please Thee as my love is to satisfy myself. Give me such a love for Thee as may be called a love of reparation, such as may, by its ardour and constancy, make amends for the languor and inconstancy of mine. Amen.

CHAPTER IV

THAT WE OUGHT TO WALK BEFORE
AND HUMILITY.

Son, walk before Me in truth
seek me in the simplicity of

He that walketh before
shall be secured from evil in
the Truth shall deliver him from
and from the detractions of

If the Truth shall have me
thou shalt be indeed free, and
no account of the vain words

Lord, it is true as Thou
beseech Thee, let it be done
Let Thy Truth teach me, let
and preserve me unto a savior

Let it deliver me from all
and inordinate love, and I shall
Thee in great freedom of heart

2. I will teach thee, saith
those things that are right and
My sight.

Think on thy sins with

and sorrow; and never esteem thy-
to be any thing on account of thy
d works.

If a truth thou art a sinner, subject to,
d entangled with many passions.

Of thyself thou always tendest to no-
ing, speedily dost thou fail, speedily art
hou overcome, speedily disturbed, speed-
ly dissolved.

Thou hast not any thing in which thou
canst glory, but many things for which
thou oughtest to abase thyself; for thou
art much weaker than thou canst compre-
hend.

3. Let nothing, then, seem much to
thee of all that thou doest.

Let nothing appear great, nothing val-
uable or admirable, nothing worthy of
esteem, nothing high, nothing truly praise-
worthy or desirable, but that which is
eternal.

Let the eternal Truth please thee above
all things, *and thy own exceeding great
vileness ever displease thee.*

Fear nothing so much, blame and fle

nothing so much, as t
which ought to displease
the loss of any thing wha

Some persons walk not
Me; but led by a certai
arrogance, desire to know
to understand the high
neglecting themselves and
vation.

These often, when I resist
great temptations and sins
pride and curiosity.

4. Fear the judgments o
the anger of the Almighty;
not to examine the works
High, but search diligently
iniquities, in how great thin
offended, and how much go
neglected.

Some only carry their
their books, some in picture
in outward signs and figures.

Some have Me in their n
there is little of Me in their

Others there are, who,

their understanding, and purified in their affection, always pant after the things eternal; are unwilling to hear of earthly things, and grieve to be subject to the necessities of nature: and such as these perceive what the Spirit of Truth speaketh in them; for it teacheth them to despise the things of the earth, and to love the heavenly things; to disregard the world, and day and night to aspire after heaven.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

Nothing can more effectually teach thee what thou art, than the consideration of thy many miseries. As thou becomest convinced of thy evil inclinations, so wilt thou not elevate thyself by thoughts of vanity or self-complacency. Happy then the soul that knows itself, that knows and bewails its own miseries, weakness, and evil inclinations! It is this which subjects it to God, and obliges it to have frequent recourse to Him, and to humble itself under His all-powerful hand. The continual danger it apprehends of yielding to temptation keeps it in a state of perpetual dependence upon Him, and of sincere and constant deprivation for His sake. Be determined, then, willingly to receive from the hand of God whatever trials He is pleased to send thee, to

enter into His designs, and to su
pleasure.

PRAYER.

As I am sensible, O God, that
pleasing to Thee than the dispe
which depends upon Thee in
which applies itself to know and
so the grace which I now ask of
may be docile to Thy inspiratio
in following them. I well know
quiest of me a sincere and cor
to Thy service, an exact fidelity
and an absolute conformity to T
I know that Thou requirest me
actions by an interior spirit, and
pleasing Thee. This, above all
Thee, my God, to be employed c
for Thee, to esteem nothing but
and to reckon as nothing all th
with time. When, O God, shall
a life of death to all things, a l
Jesus Christ in Thee, become my
now my desire? Unite my so
Thyself, captivate and confirm r
love, both for time and eternity.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE WONDERFUL EFFECT OF DIVINE LOVE.

I BLESS Thee, O heavenly Father, Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, because Thou hast vouchsafed to be mindful of me, poor as I am.

O Father of mercies, and God of all consolation, I give thanks to Thee, that sometimes Thou art pleased to cherish with Thy consolations me, who am unworthy of any consolation.

I bless and glorify Thee evermore, together with Thy only-begotten Son and the Holy Ghost the Comforter, for ever and ever.

O Lord God, my holy Lover, when Thou shalt come into my heart, all that is within me shall be filled with joy.

Thou art my glory and the exultation of my heart.

Thou art my hope and my refuge in the day of my tribulation.

2. But because I am as yet weak in

love and imperfect in virt
do I stand in need of being
and comforted by Thee. V
Thou visit me often, and in
Thy holy discipline.

Free me from evil passio
my heart of all disorderly a
that inwardly healed and w
may become apt to love, c
suffer, and steadfast to perse

3. A great thing is love,
every way ; which alone li
that is burthensome, and bea
all that is unequal :

For it carrieth a burden v
burdened, and maketh all
bitter sweet and savoury.

The noble love of Jesus
to do great things, and excite
to desire that which is the m

Love will tend upwards,
detained by things beneath.

Love will be at liberty, a
all worldly affection, that
vision be not hindered ; t

not to be entangled with any temporal interest, or cast down by misfortune. Nothing is sweeter than love, nothing purer, nothing higher, nothing wider, nothing more pleasant, nothing fuller or more perfect in heaven or in earth : for love is of God, and cannot rest but in God, above all created things.

The lover flieth, runneth, and rejoiceth; he is free, and cannot be restrained.

He giveth all for all, and hath all in recompence because he resteth in one sovereign God above all, from whom all good things come forth and proceedeth.

He looketh not at the gifts, but turneth himself, above all goods, to the Giver.

He often knoweth no measure, but is more fervent above all measure.

He feeleth no burthen, thinketh nothing of labours, would willingly do more than he can, complaineth not of impossibilities because *it conceiveth that it may do all things.*

It can achieve any thing; and it doth

bereth not.

When weary it is not tired
straitened is not constrained ; wh
ed is not disturbed ; but like
flame and a burning torch, it r
upwards, and securely passeth thr

Whosoever loveth knoweth th
this voice.

A loud cry in the ears of Go
ardent affection of the soul whi
O my God, my Love, Thou art
and I am all Thine.

6. Enlarge Thou me in love, th
learn to taste with the interior n

my soul quite lose herself in Thy praises,
exultant in Thy love.

Let me love Thee more than myself,
and myself only for Thee, and all others
for Thee, who truly love Thee, as the law
of love commandeth, which shineth forth
from Thee.

7. Love is swift, sincere, pious, pleasant,
and delightful; strong, patient, faithful,
ardent, long-suffering, courageous, and
never seeking itself.

For where a man seeketh himself, there
he falleth from love.

Love is circumspect, humble, upright;
it is soft, not light, nor intent upon vain
things; is sober, chaste, steadfast, quiet,
and keepeth a guard over all the senses.

Love is submissive and obedient to Su-
periors; in its own eyes mean and con-
temptible, devout and thankful to God,
always trusting and hoping in Him, even
when it tasteth not the relish of God's
sweetness; for there is no living in love,
without some sorrow.

8. *Whosoever is not ready to suffer all*

things, and to stand resigned to the will of his Beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover.

He that loveth must willingly embrace all that is hard and bitter for the sake of his Beloved, and never suffer himself to be turned away from Him by any contrary occurrences whatsoever.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

Who shall ever conceive or explain the wonderful effects of the love of God in a soul that is faithful to its impressions, and firm in the time of trial? It is much better to feel them than to speak of them; and it is more perfect to practise them than to feel them. What does not the love of God effect when it is active, solid, and constant, in a soul that is captivated with the beauty and goodness of its God, and inflamed with the ardour of His holy charity! It often thinks of Him, for we cannot forget what we love; it does all to please Him; it suffers all for His sake; it carefully avoids the slightest faults; for how can we love God and be willing to offend Him? It desires for God all the good which He is and possesses; it would that all the hearts of men were but one, and this the heart of a seraph; it rejoices in all the glory that is given to Him in hea-

ven and on earth; it invites all creatures to love and praise Him; it would procure for Him, at the expense of its very life and being, if it were possible, any addition of happiness and delight; it cannot be consoled for His absence; it sighs incessantly for the happiness of seeing Him; it considers this life an exile, which the will of God alone makes supportable; it looks upon death with joy, as being the only means of coming to the possession of Him, and of no more offending Him; it burns with a secret fire, which with lively ardour consumes it before God, in God, and for God; it lives no longer for itself, but for Him whom it loves more than itself; it seeks, it finds, it beholds every where its God. Its joy and its felicity in this world is to suffer, to renounce, and to annihilate itself; and to die to all sensible objects in order to gain the love of Jesus. It believes, it hopes, it loves with a sovereign love, through the respect, esteem, and attachment which it has for the Author of its faith, hope, and charity. God exists, it says, and that is enough for my happiness, my consolation, and my joy. God deserves to be served; he wills that I should do or suffer this for Him; Jesus Christ was most willing to do and to suffer all for me. It is not satisfied with submitting itself in every thing to the orders of its God; it seeks but to know His inclinations, and His good pleasure is its law. In a word, a soul that loves its God no longer lives

by its own life, but it is God who
it.

PRAYER.

Is it possible, O Lord, that Thou, infinitely amiable, and who lovest us, shouldst find in us so little love, shouldst find in us so little love, shouldst find in us so little love. Revive in our hearts that fire of which Thou, my Saviour, didst give upon the earth, and which should glow within us. Grant us not to be insensible and indifferent to all we feel, neither ardour nor attachment alone; and that, being ever disposed to lose all, rather than Thy love, we may love Thee in preference to things else, and esteem our whole life less consideration than Thee. Give us that habitual love of Thee which Thy grace; inspire us with an active love in all our actions. Give us the strength which, causing us to do all for an end, procure for us the happiness of the exercise of Thy love, to continue in blessed eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE PROOF OF A TRUE LOVER.

son, thou art not yet a valiant and a
lent lover.

Why, O Lord ?

ecause thou fallest off from what thou
begun upon meeting with a little
raity, and too eagerly seekest after
olation.

valiant lover standeth his ground in
xtations, and yieldeth not to the crafty
usions of the enemy.

s I please him when in prosperity, so
please him not in adversity.

A prudent lover considereth not so
h the gift of the lover as the love of
giver.

e looketh more at the good-will than
value, and setteth every gift beneath
beloved.

generous lover resteth not in the gift,
z *Me, above every gift.*

therefore is not lost, if sometimes

thou hast not that feeling [c
towards Me or My Saints
wouldst have.

That good and delightf
which thou sometimes perce
effect of present grace, and a
taste of thy heavenly country;
thou oughtest not to lean to
cause it goeth and cometh.

But to fight against the e
of the mind which arise, and
the suggestions of the devil,
virtue and of great merit.

3. Let not, therefore, strang
of whatever kind suggested to

Keep thy resolution firm,
tention upright, towards God.

Neither is it an illusion, be
times thou art rapt in ecstac
ently returnest to the accustor
of thy heart.

For these thou rather unwi
est with than occasionest; an
they displease thee, and th
them, it is merit and not lo

4. Know that the old enemy striveth by all means to hinder thy desire after God, and to draw thee from every devout exercise; namely, from the veneration of the Saints, from the pious remembrance of My Passion, from the profitable calling to mind of thy sins, from watchfulness over thy own heart, and from a firm purpose of advancing in virtue.

He suggesteth many evil thoughts, that they may cause thee tediousness and horror, that he may call thee away from prayer and holy reading.

He is displeased with humble confession; and if he could, he would cause thee to cease from Communion.

Give no credit to him, care not for him though he often set for thee a snare of deception.

Charge him with it when he suggests wicked and unclean things, and say to him:

Begone, unclean spirit; be ashamed, miserable wretch; most unclean art thou to suggest such things in my ears.

Depart from me, thou seducer; thou shalt have but Jesus will be with me warrior, and thou shalt stand

I prefer to die, and to suffer torment whatsoever, rather than leave thee.

Hold thy peace, and behold hear thee no further, although thou times molest me.

The Lord is my light and whom shall I fear?

If whole armies should fight against me, my heart shall not fail, for the Lord is my helper and my strength.

5. Fight like a good soldier, sometimes thou shalt fall through want of some greater courage than I have, but in My more abundant grace I will take very great care against complacency and pride.

Through this many are deceived and sometimes fall into all kinds of blindness.

Let this fall of the proud

ning on themselves, serve thee as a
rning, and keep thee always humble.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

KNOW that the true love of God may consist
re in suffering, for His sake, dryness, disgust,
| the most grievous temptations, without yield-
to them, than in the enjoyment of interior de-
its, sweetnesses, and consolations ; for in the
instance we receive much from God, in the
er we give much to Him. In the one we love
gifts of God, in the other we love Himself
| His holy will preferably to all His gifts ; and
love by which we love God for what He is,
much more perfect than that by which we love
n for what He bestows upon us. Ah ! how
ning to Almighty God to behold a soul ever
teful over itself to keep its heart free from
least faults, ever attentive to its duties, in
dience to His orders, and in resignation to
| holy will, and ever willing generously to re-
the demands of nature and the temptations
he devil. A soul which neither allows nor
does itself any thing, but endeavours to cor-
pond with the holy designs of God in its re-
d, to destroy in itself every thing human, and
verthrow *self-love*, takes for the rule of its
not that rule of true love : All to please God,
nothing to gratify myself. But what most

pleases God is to see that this so with the strength and grace of its contests with itself and its endure nothing contrary to His glory see that it neither asks, nor seeks consolation or sensible support, the delight which God takes in even without being sensibly assured pleasure in it. Its submission and exaltation are its consolation and satisfaction becoming a victim of immolation to God.

PRAYER.

ABANDON me not, O Lord, to the power of self-love, which will suffer no increase by the inefficacy of my desires, by what I never perform. Penetrate me with a conviction of the happiness of suffering all for Thee, and as Thou wilt Grant that, having no other in view and willing only what Thou wilt, I receive pains of mind as cheerfull of spirit; and hoping that, provided Thou wilt spare me hereafter, I shall be satisfied whatever I may have in this life. The less I enjoy Thee, the more I love Thee; the more I love Thee, the more I desire of my heart, that I may

serve the more to possess Thee. O my God! my Saviour! I am willing to be deprived of all consolation here below, provided I never offend Thee. What a happiness to become a victim of Calvary, a martyr of Thy crucified heart, and entirely devoted to Thy good pleasure! Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

OF CONCEALING GRACE UNDER THE GUARDIANSHIP OF HUMILITY.

My son, it is both more advantageous and more secure for thee, to keep secret the grace of devotion, and not, therefore, to extol thyself, not to talk much about it, nor to ponder it overmuch; but rather to despise thyself the more, and to tremble as if given to one unworthy.

Thou must not tenaciously cleave to such affection as may quickly be changed contrariwise.

Think with thyself, when thou hast grace, *how miserable and poor thou art wont to be when deprived of it.*
Nor doth progress in spiritual life con-

sist so much in having the consolation, but in bearing the weight of it with humility, self-abnegation, patience; so as not then to grow weary in the exercise of prayer, nor to allow self to relax from any of thy assigned good works, but to the best of thy power and understanding do willingly in thee, and do not, through an over-care or anxiety of mind which thou shalt wholly neglect thyself.

2. For many there are who, when they do not succeed well with them, grow impatient or slothful.

Now the way of man is not of his own power, but it belongeth to God to give and to console when He will, as much as He willeth, and as He will, just as it shall please Him more.

Some, wanting caution, have deceived themselves by reason of the great devotion; because they were for doing more than they could, not weighing the measure of their own littleness.

lowing rather the affection of the heart than the judgment of reason.

And as they presumptuously undertook greater things than were pleasing to God, therefore they quickly lost grace.

Needy did they become, and miserably abandoned, who had built themselves a nest in heaven; to the end that, thus tumbled and impoverished, they might learn not to fly with their own pinions, but to trust under My wings.

Such as are yet but novices, and inexperienced in the way of the Lord, unless they govern themselves by the counsel of the discreet, may easily be deceived and lost.

3. And if they will rather follow their own judgment than believe others who have more experience, their end will be perilous, should they still refuse to be withdrawn from their own conceits.

The self-wise rarely endure humbly to be ruled by others.

Better is it to have but little knowledge with humility and a weak capacity, than

great stores of learning with vain complacency.

Better is it to have little than much whereof thou mightest be proud.

He acts not with sufficient discretion who giveth himself up wholly to joy, getting his former poverty, and the cheerful fear of the Lord which feareth to lose grace that is proffered.

Neither is he virtuously enough satisfied who, in time of adversity or any tribulation whatsoever, conducteth himself despairingly, and thinketh of and repovels less confidingly in Me than he ought.

4. He who would be too secure in time of peace will often be found too much dejected and fearful in time of war.

If thou couldst always continue humble and little in thine own eyes, and keep thy spirit in due order and subjection, thou wouldst not fall so easily into danger and offence.

It is good counsel, that when thou hast conceived the spirit of fervour, thou shouldst meditate how it will be

bee when that light shall be withdrawn.

And when this shall happen, remember that the light may return again, which, for caution to thee and for My glory, I have withdrawn for a time.

5. Such a trial is oftentimes more profitable than if thou wert always to have prosperity according to thy will.

For a man's merits are not to be estimated by his having many visions or consolations, or by his knowledge of Scripture, or by his being placed in a more elevated station.

But by his being grounded in true humility and replenished with divine charity; by his seeking always, purely and entirely, the honour of God; by his esteeming himself to be nothing, and by his sincerely despising himself; and being better pleased to be despised and humbled by others than to be honoured by them.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

Man in the state of innocence would have had God with sweetness, with ease, and with

perfect love, because all within him submitted without difficulty to His will, out of the state of sin in which we now are, we cannot serve Him without continually fighting against ourselves, nor can we love Him without fighting against ourselves; we can do but little for Him, and we do against ourselves. Hence we willingly submit to the dryness, disgust, and uneasiness which we frequently experience in the exercises of piety; we should enter into the will of Almighty God, make a merit of His will, please Him without gratifying ourselves, and willingly consent to become victims and to sacrifice all for His honour. O Christian soul know how far a state of love may be made a holy and sanctifying state of proved and purified love for God, and a state in which we neither seek ourselves in any thing but purely God, that soul esteem it! What care would it be to profit by it, that is, to suffer patiently and support the Lord with courage, and to do nothing, whatever uneasiness might arise, if we are thoroughly persuaded of, and deep with a conviction of the continual life of dryness when supported with love, we should without doubt endeavour to follow with the designs of God, who would have us not to seek ourselves in any thing but to endeavour only to please Him, and

t of His good pleasure. We should esteem
 lves happy in sacrificing to God the gratifi-
 as of our hearts, in yielding ourselves up to
 and in doing our duty, even without the
 action of knowing that we please Him.

PRAYER.

RIFY my heart, O Lord, from the pursuits of
 ove, which is never satisfied with what is
 for Thee unless it also be gratified by it.
 t that, in all my exercises of piety, I may
 rather to please Thee than to gratify myself:
 dying daily to the natural life of my soul, in
 h consists true satisfaction, I may seek no
 pleasure than fidelity in Thy service and
 ness in following Thy holy will in all things;
 so, approaching to Thee, my God, more by
 than by sense, I may do and suffer all for
 love, notwithstanding my natural aversion
 he deprivation of all the sweetness and sen-
 charms of piety, persuaded of the truth of
 Thou didst once say to St. Gertrude, that
 reservest until death the consolation of
 ve perform without consolation during life.
 t, therefore, that my whole employment and
 y happiness may be to serve and to love
 much more for Thyself than for my own
 fication. *Amen.*

CHAPTER V

OF THE MEAN ESTIMATION OF
EYES OF GOD

I WILL speak to my Lord
but dust and ashes.

If I repute myself great
behold, Thou standest against
my sins bear a true testimony
not contradict it.

But if I abase myself,
self down to very nothing
myself of all self-esteem,
self (as I really am) to
grace will be favourable
light will draw nigh to my
self-estimation, how small
sunk in the depth of my
and there lose itself for ever.

It is there Thou showest
what I am, what I have become
I am come; for I am nothing
it not.

If I am left to myself

hing, and all weakness; but if Thou
 suddenly look upon me, I presently be-
 come strong, and am replenished with
 joy.

And truly wonderful it is that I am so
 quickly raised up and so graciously em-
 braced by Thee; I who, by my own
 iniquity, am always sinking down to the
 lowest depths.

2. It is Thy love that effects this, gratui-
 tously preventing and assisting me in so
 many necessities, preserving me also from
 various dangers, and, as I may truly say,
 saving me from innumerable evils.

For, by a perverse loving of myself, I
 have lost myself; and by seeking Thee
 alone, and purely loving Thee, I have
 found both myself and Thee; and by this
 I have more profoundly annihilated
 myself.

Because Thou, O most sweet Lord, dost
 dwell with me above all desert, and above
 that I dare hope or ask for.

3. *Blessed be Thou, O my God; for-
 gh I am unworthy of all good, yet*

Thy generosity and infinite goodness never cease to do good even to those that are ungrateful, and that are turned far away from Thee.

Oh, convert us unto Thee, that we may be humble, thankful, and devout; for Thou art our salvation, our courage, and our strength.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

WHEN we perceive within ourselves any feelings of vanity or self-complacency, we need but consider, for one moment, the unfathomable depth of our corruption, and descend into the abyss of our miseries, to stifle them in their very birth. For how can we represent to ourselves that universal incapacity which we experience for supernatural good, our inclination for evil, how violently we are carried towards wickedness, the blindness of our understandings, the malice of our hearts and the fury of our passions, which are always revolting against reason; in a word, how can we consider what we really are, and not despise and humble ourselves beneath all creatures? And if we consider ourselves with reference to God; if we reflect what He is and what we are in His sight, a mere nothing, sinners, but sinners loaded with the numberless crimes we have com-

ted, not knowing whether they have ever
 a pardoned ; creatures so weak and feeble, so
 nstant in good and so constant in evil ; alas !
 baps in the sight of God, living and dying in
 state of sin, and worthy only of his eternal
 ed ; how, in the midst of such reflections, can
 possibly consent to the least thought of van-
 How true it is that to esteem ourselves is
 to know, but to forget what we are.

PRAYER.

SUFFER not pride, O Lord, to deprive us of the
 it and conviction of our manifold miseries.
 ige us to do justice to ourselves and to Thee,
 referring the glory of all things to Thee, to
 m alone it belongs ; and by giving to our-
 es nothing but contempt, which is truly our
 rt and appropriate portion. How does a
 istian who knows that he is all Thine, my
 iour, and that he carries within himself an
 haustible source of malice and corruption,
 Thee alone the honour of all the good he
 do by the help of Thy grace, and attribute
 ing to himself but the evil which he com-
 , since without Thee he is incapable of doing
 thing but sin ! Fill my heart with this true
 ility, without which it is impossible ever to
 me worthy of Thy love. Amen.



CHAPTER I

THAT ALL THINGS ARE TO BE RE-
AS TO OUR LAST I

SON, I must be thy suprem
end, if thou desirest to be

By this intention shall th
purified, which too often
bent upon thyself and thing

For if in any thing tho
self, thou presently faintes
thyself, and groweth dry.

Principally, therefore, ref
Me; for it is I that have gi

Consider each thing as fl
sovereign Good; and there
be returned to Me, as to th

2. Out of Me both little
and rich, as out of a living
living water; and they w
willingly serve Me shall re
grace.

But he who would glori
else beside Me, or delig

his own, shall not be established in joy, nor enlarged in his heart; but many ways shall be impeded and itened.

Therefore thou must not ascribe any d to thyself, nor attribute virtue to man; but give all to God, without on man has nothing.

have given all, I will also have all in; and with great strictness do I re- e a return of thanks.

. This is that truth by which all vain- y is put to flight.

and if heavenly grace and true charity e in, there shall be no envy nor nar- ness of heart, nor shall self-love keep ession.

'or divine charity overcometh all, and rgeth all the powers of the soul.

'thou art truly wise, thou wilt rejoice le alone, thou wilt hope in Me alone; none is good but God alone, who is e praised above all, and to be blessed

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

LET an upright and pure intention of God direct all thy actions, and endeavour Him the whole glory of all the good thou formest, for He is the plenitude and source of good. Glory only in thy infirmities, as thou turnest them to thy advantage by frequently presenting them to the God of all mercy, who is ever pleased in a soul that is penetrated with the sense of its own nothingness. Dwell not upon thoughts of vanity and self-complacency, and do not desire to be praised and esteemed by men; for God confounds and despises those who seek to please men and to obtain their praises; the only means by which thou canst please God and gain His love, is to despise and hate thys

PRAYER.

PERMIT me not, O Lord, to attribute the good to myself, but to refer all to Thee, who alone art the Author of every good work. Thy will is Thy portion, and I will give it wholly and entirely to Thee: confusion is mine, and I accept it from Thy hand; happy if, by resigning myself to contempt, I become the object of Thy favours, and if, by living an humble and concealed life, I die to myself and to the world, and live only to Thee. Amen.

CHAPTER X.

SWEET TO DESPISE THE WORLD, AND
TO SERVE GOD.

I speak again, O Lord, and will
ent; I will say in the hearing of
and my King who is on high,
w great is the abundance of Thy
, O Lord, which Thou hast hid-
ose that fear Thee !

at art Thou to those that love
at to those that serve Thee with
le heart ?

kable, indeed, is the sweetness
ontemplation, which Thou be-
a those that love Thee.

most of all hast Thou shewed
vetness of Thy love, that when
eing, Thou didst make me ; and
is straying far from Thee, Thou
t me back again, that I might
e ; and Thou hast commanded
e Thee.

*untain of everlasting love, what
if Thee ?*

cy to Thy servant; and beyond :
hast Thou manifested Thy g
friendship.

What return shall I make to
this favour? for it is not granted
forsake all things, to renounce th
and to assume the monastic life.

Is it much that I should ser
whom the whole creation is b
serve?

It ought not to seem much
serve Thee; but this rather dot
great and wonderful to me, th

eated for the service of man, stand
pared, and daily perform whatsoever
ou hast commanded.

And this is but little; for Thou hast
so created and appointed angels for the
rvice of man.

But what transcendeth all this is, that
ou Thyself hast vouchsafed to serve
an, and hast promised that Thou wilt
ve him Thyself.

4. What shall I give Thee for all these
ousand favours? Would that I could
rve Thee all the days of my life!

Would that I were able, were it but
r one day, to render Thee worthy
mage!

Verily Thou art worthy of all service,
all honour, and of eternal praise.

Thou art truly my Lord, and I am Thy
or servant, who am bound with all my
ength to serve Thee, and ought never
grow weary of praising Thee.

This is my will, this is my desire; and
whatever is wanting in me do Thou
chsafe to supply.

5. It is a great honour, to serve Thee, and to despise for Thee.

For they who willingly selves to Thy most holy service, shall receive great grace.

They shall experience the consolation of the Holy Spirit, and the love of Thee have cast a delight.

They shall gain great freedom, who for Thy name enter up the way, and relinquish all worldly things.

6. O pleasant and delightful state, which maketh a man holy !

O sacred state of religion, which maketh men equal to God, terrible to the wicked, and commendable to all the faithful.

O servitude lovely and desired, in which we are rewarded with the greatest good, and joy is acquired with never end !

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

To judge ourselves unworthy of every grace ; to correspond with those we receive ; to refer to God all the glory of our fidelity in His service ; often to thank Him for His goodness in seeking us when we go astray, and receiving us again after we have sinned ; to hope all things from His mercy, and to place ourselves entirely in His hands, is what should be done by every Christian soul who knows what Jesus Christ is to him, and what he ought to be to Jesus Christ.

How fortunate are we in not being able to find in ourselves any real cause for feelings of vanity or self-complacency, for this obliges us to awake ourselves, and abide only in God ! Ah ! how does the sense of our miseries establish us in the heart of the God of mercy ! and how does the experience of our inability to do good, and our inclination for evil, oblige us to adhere to God, and to have continual recourse to Him.

PRAYER.

How can I forget Thee, O Lord, who hast so often preserved me from hell, into which I might have precipitated myself by my irregular or useless life ! Cure me of that vain complacency and swelling pride which would persuade me that there is something of good in me. It is Thee, O Lord, it is all from Thee ; for without

Thee I can do nothing but offer me not to exalt myself before Thy pride, lest I draw upon myself tishment with which Thou didst angela. I would rather be despised by Thee, than be esteemed and reproved by Thee. Grant that justice by referring all that is good to myself naught but the evil I do, that I may thus obtain thy blessing. Amen.

CHAPTER X

THAT THE DESIRES OF OUR HEARTS
EXAMINED AND MODESTLY

SON, it behooves thee still to examine things, which thou hast learned.

2. What are these, Lord

3. That thou conform in all thy desire to My good pleasure: be not a lover of thyself, but be zealous that My will may be done.

Desires often inflame the heart, and violently impel thee: but c

My honour or thy own interest
a art most moved.

am the cause, thou wilt be well
ed with whatever I shall ordain;
there lurk in thee any self-seeking,
, this it is that hindereth thee and
eth thee down.

Take care, then, not to rely too
upon any preconceived desire be-
thou hast consulted Me; lest perhaps
wards thou repent, or be displeased
a that which at first pleased thee, and
ich thou wast zealous for as the best.

For not every inclination which ap-
weth good is therefore at once to be
lowed; nor is every contrary affection
once to be rejected.

Even in good intentions and desires it
expedient sometimes to use some re-
unt; lest by too much eagerness thou
ur distraction of mind; lest for want
discipline thou generate scandal to
ers; or by *opposition* from others thou
suddenly disturbed and fall.

Sometimes, indeed, we must us

violence, and manfully re appetite, and not regard liketh or disliketh, but ra that, even against its will, ject to the spirit.

And so long must it b kept under servitude, till in all things, and learn to a little, and to be pleased and not to murmur at any

PRACTICAL REFLEC

OUR desires should be regul God, moderated by the influence referred to His glory. True n heart consists in repressing the aires, in turning their earnestne in directing them all to the which is God. The holy prac ciation, which is absolutely ne tion, and which is included in Gospel and the engagements o sists entirely in repressing our in raising our indifferent or n to a supernatural end, and i hopes of salvation, through th on the fulfilment of our good

PRAYER.

1. O Lord, shall I become so wearied by irregular and fruitless desires as to be unable to regulate them by Thy holy will, and practise the good which I desire to perform. I am not satisfied with continually saying I desire earnestly to be all Thine, and to serve Thee faithfully, without doing it with constancy, and desiring it effectually! Alas! my God, I know that hell is filled with good desires and good intentions, yet still it is hell. Can I be contented and gain salvation by only desiring it, as many condemned Christians have desired and still desire it? Root out, O Lord, this inefficiency of my desires, which may lead me to perdition; and grant that I may ever unite to the use of those means Thou affordest me for pleasing Thee and of saving my soul. Amen.

CHAPTER XII.

OF ACQUIRING PATIENCE, AND OF STRIVING AGAINST CONSCIENCE.

1. O Lord God, patience, as I perceive, is very necessary for me, for many adversities happen to us in this life.

For in whatsoever way I
for my peace, my life cannot
war and sorrow.

2. My son, so it is; for
have thee seek for such a peace
no temptations, or to feel
but then, indeed, think of
peace, when thou shalt be
divers tribulations, and tri-
versity.

If thou shalt say thou art
suffer much, how then wilt
the fire of purgatory?

Of two evils, one ought always
the less.

That thou mayest, therefore
future eternal punishment, con-
tiently to endure present evil
sake.

Thinkest thou that men
suffer nothing or but little?
not find it so, though thou
most voluptuous.

3. But sayest thou, thou
many delights and withal

therefore make small account of their
ulations ?

Be it so, that they have all they de-
; but how long thinkest thou this
last ?

Behold, as smoke shall they vanish that
and in this world, and there shall be
remembrance of their past joys.

Day, even whilst they live, they rest
in the possession of them without bit-
tress, weariness, and fear.

From the very same thing whence they
ceive delight, thence frequently do they
ve the penalty of anguish.

Is just with them it should be so, that
e they seek and follow inordinately
r pleasures, they should not enjoy
a without confusion and bitterness.

h, how short, how deceitful, how in-
nate and shameful, are all these pleas-
!

et, through sottishness and blindness,
understand this not, but, like dumb an-
; *for the poor pleasure of this mortal*
ey incur the death of the soul.

But thou, my son, go :
concupiscence, but turn av
own will.

Delight in the Lord, and
thee the desires of thy heart

5. For if thou wouldst
of delight, and be abundan
by Me, behold, in the co
things worldly, and in the
every sordid gratification, sh
ing be, and consolation mos
rendered to thee.

And the more thou with
self from all solace of
sweeter and the more pow
tions wilt thou find in Me.

But thou shalt not attain
first without some sorrow a
conflict.

Long-standing custom v
sistance, but by a better hal
subdued.

The flesh will complain, b
of spirit shall it be reined in

The old serpent will ins

de thee anew ; but by prayer he shall
ut to flight ; moreover, by useful
oyment his greater access to thee
be prevented.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

The peace of soul consists in an humble and
nt submission to the will of God under the
st pains and the most violent temptations.
thou findest within thyself nothing but
nance, trouble, and despondency, it is then
y renouncing thyself, and giving thyself
y into the hands of God, thou wilt obtain
eace of soul. To separate thyself from
thing pleasing, to accept every thing that
greeable as coming from the hand of God,
quer on all occasions thy repugnance, is the
way to arrive at true peace.

PRAYER.

Tu alone, O Jesus, canst impart to us this
r peace, this peace of God, this ineffable
and this humble submission. We ask it
e, and we hope it from Thee. Give us
ecious gift, we beseech Thee, which may
ur minds and our hearts in Thy faith and
Amen.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF THE OBEDIENCE OF AN HUMBLE SUBJECT,
THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS CHRIST.

SON, he who striveth to withdraw self from obedience withdraweth him from grace; and he that seeketh particular privileges loseth such as are in common.

He who doth not freely and will submit himself to his Superior, it sign that his flesh is not as yet perfectly obedient to him, but oftentimes rebellious and murmureth.

Learn, then, to submit thyself to thy Superior, if thou desire to subvert thy own flesh.

For sooner is the exterior enemy overcome, if the inward man be not wasted.

There is not a more troublesome enemy to the soul than thou thyself art when not well agreeing with spirit.

Thou must in good earnest conceive a true contempt of thyself, if thou wilt prevail against flesh and blood.

Because as yet thou lovest thyself too inordinately, therefore dost thou fear to resign thyself entirely to the will of others.

2. But what great matter is it, if thou be art but dust and a mere nothing, submit thyself to man for God's sake, when I, the Almighty and the Most High, who created all things out of nothing, have for thy sake humbly subjected myself to man?

I became the most humble and most subject of all men, that thou mightest overcome thy pride by My humility.

Learn, O dust, to obey; learn to humble thyself, earth and clay, and to bow under the feet of all.

Learn to break thy own will, and to yield thyself up to all subjection.

3. Kindle wrath against thyself, suffer *not the swelling of pride to live in thee; shew thyself so submissive and little*

that all may trample on thee
thee under their feet as the
streets.

What hast thou, vain man,
plain of?

What answer, wretched man,
thou make to those that re-
buke thee who hast so often of-
fended and so very many times de-
served.

But Mine eye hath spared thee
because thy soul was precious in
that thou mightest know Me
and mightest always live thank-
ful for favours; and that thou mightest
continually give thyself to truth
and humility, and bear patiently
contempt.

PRACTICAL REFLECTION

WE must not be satisfied with
submitting to obedience and in things
but we must obey with our whole
things the most difficult. For the
difficulty, the greater also is the
obedience. Can we refuse to submit
God's sake, when God, for love of
man, even to his very execution

Jesus Christ was willingly obedient during his whole life, and even unto the death of the cross; and am I unwilling to spend my life in the exercise of obedience, and to make it my cross and my merit! Independence belongs to God, who has made man dependent upon others, that his subordination may be to him the means of his sanctification. I will therefore form myself upon the model of my submissive, dependent, and obedient Saviour, and dispose of nothing in myself, not even of my own will.

PRAYER.

O my Saviour, who, in obedience to Thy Father, wast conceived in the womb of Mary, who didst go down to Nazareth, and wast subject to Thy parents for thirty years, who wouldst be born, and live, and die in obedience, induce us to follow Thy example, to obey Thee in all things in the persons of our superiors, who hold Thy place in our regard. Grant that, doing willingly what is ordained us, and endeavouring to believe it best, we may spend our whole lives in continual obedience, and thus secure for ourselves Thy grace in time, and Thy glory for all eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER X

OF CONSIDERING THE SECRET J
THAT WE BE NOT PUFFED U
GOOD WORKS.

THOU thunderest forth
Thy judgments, O Lord, an
all my bones with fear
and my soul is terrified ex

I stand astonished, and
the heavens are not pure i

If in the Angels Thou
pravity, and hast not spa
will become of me?

Stars have fallen from
dust as I am, how can I pr

They whose works s
worthy have fallen to the
and those that did eat the l
I have seen delighted with
swine.

2. There is no sancti
Lord, withdraw Thy hand.

No wisdom avails, if
govern us.

No strength is of any help, if Thou
wilt not preserve us.

No chastity is secure without Thy pro-
tection.

No self-custody profits us, if Thy holy
vigilance be not nigh unto us.

For left to ourselves, we sink and per-
ish; but by Thee visited, we are raised
and live.

For we are unsteadfast, but by Thee
we are strengthened; we are tepid, but
by Thee we are inflamed.

O, how humbly and lowly ought
I to think of myself; of how little
worth, whatever good I may seem to
have!

O, how profoundly ought I to abase
myself under Thy unfathomable judg-
ments, O Lord, where I find myself to be
nothing else but nothing, and altogether
nothing!

O weight immense! O sea that cannot
be passed over, where I find nothing of
myself but only and wholly nothing!
here, then, is there any lurking-place

for glorying? where any
ceived of my own virtue?

All vain-glory is swallow'd
profundity of Thy judgment.

4. What is all flesh in?

Shall the clay glory against
formed it?

How can he be puffed up
whose heart is subjected to Thee?

All the world will not lie
the Truth hath subjected to Thee.

Neither will he be moved
tongues of all that praise Thee,
settled his whole hope in Thee.

For even they who speak
are all nothing, for they speak
with the sound of their voices,
Truth of the Lord remaineth.

PRACTICAL REFLECTION

THE contemplation of the holiness
of God, in whose sight the heavens
and the conviction of our own corruption,
should stifle in us every
of pride. An Angel sins, and
him; He rejects him, and casteth

and He bears with him ; He offers him and opens to him the gates of heaven. In angels we behold the horrid nature of the awful character of God's justice ; in the loving love of Jesus we are invited to rely in His tender mercy : from both motives of a speedy conversion from sin to our gratitude, and to animate us to holiness.

PRAYER.

Thou infinite sanctity, who canst not endure iniquity, canst Thou endure me, an unworthy sinner who am committing iniquity without ceasing, and am continually displeasing Thee? O purity, before whom the heavens are full of corruption, and who didst discover corruption in angels, why dost Thou not reject me, O light but defilement and sin? *Lord, have mercy, Thou canst make me clean.* I cast myself in Thy mercy, and conjure Thee to correct and to punish all my sins, O Thou infinite sanctity. Amen.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW WE ARE TO BE DISPOSED, AND WHAT
TO SAY, WHEN WE DESIRE ANY THING.

My son, say this on every occasion:
if it be pleasing to Thee, so let it

Lord, if it be to Thy honour,
be done in Thy name.

Lord, if Thou seest that this is
dient, and approvest it as profitable
me, then grant that I may use it
honour.

But if Thou knowest that it
hurtful to me, and not profitable
salvation of my soul, take away
me such a desire.

For not every desire is from the
Ghost, though to man it seem right
good.

It is difficult to judge truly
it be a good or evil spirit that in
thee to desire this or that, or
thou art not moved to it by
spirit.

Many in the end have been deceived, who at first seemed to be led by a good spirit.

2. Whatsoever, therefore, occurreth to thy mind as worthy to be desired, it must be always with the fear of God and humility of heart that thou desire and ask for it.

And above all thou oughtest, with self-resignation, to commit all to Me, and to say :

Lord, Thou knowest what is best ; let this or that be done as Thou wilt.

Give what Thou wilt, and as much as Thou wilt, and at what time Thou wilt.

Do with me as Thou knowest, and as best pleaseth Thee, and is most for Thy honour.

Put me where Thou wilt, and do with me in all things according to Thy will.

I am in Thy hand ; turn me hither and thither as Thou choosest.

Lo, I am Thy servant, ready for all things ; *for I do not desire to live for myself, but for Thee ; oh, that I could do so in a worthy and perfect manner !*

A PRAYER,

FOR FULFILLING THE WILL

3. Grant me Thy grace, Jesus, that it may be with thee, and continue the end.

Grant me always to will that which is most acceptable to Thee, which pleaseth Thee best.

Let Thy will be mine, and I will always follow Thine, and abide with it.

Let me always will or do the same with Thee: and let me not to will or not to will otherwise than Thou willest or willest not.

4. Grant that I may die to all that are in the world, and to all love to be despised, and to all that is in this world.

Grant unto me, above all that I desire, that I may rest in Thee: my heart may be at peace.

Thou art the true peace.

at its only rest ; out of Thee all
are hard and restless.

His peace, in the selfsame, that is,
a, the one sovereign eternal Good,
sleep and take my rest. Amen.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

It is God who wills all that happens to us,
wills it for our good, for our salvation, so we
in all things to resign ourselves to His holy
intentments, that is, we should, first, will only
what God wills, and when He wills it ; secondly,
should never separate our will from His by
voluntary transgression, and never say or do
anything contrary to it ; thirdly, we should
never knowingly sin, or resist God in what He
requires from us.

A firm and constant resolution to do, to re-
sist, and to suffer whatever He at present
requires, or may in future demand of our fidel-
ity, is all that is necessary to make us victims of
His love and good pleasure, and to commence
upon earth what we hope to continue in
Heaven. Wherefore let us often pray that the
will of God may be accomplished in us in time
it will be in eternity.

PRAYER.

*O my God, whose holy will is the rule and
principle of all good, mayest Thou be the soul of*

all my actions, and the object of my heart. Grant that in me and in all trials, I may seek or suffer whatever Thou wilt, I will, and as Thou pleasest; that my own will in every thing; that Thee the sole master and proprietor that in all things it may be subject to Thy will, and never depart from it.

CHAPTER X

THAT THE TRUE CONSOLATION IS
IN GOD ALONE.

WHATSOEVER I can desire
my comfort I look not for
after.

For if I alone should have
comfort of this world, and might
delights, certain it is they
long.

Wherefore thou canst not
be fully comforted nor perfected
except in God, the Comforter
and the receiver of the heart.

Wait a little while, my soul, wait for the divine promise, and thou wilt have abundance of all good things in heaven.

If thou desirest too inordinately these present things, thou wilt lose those that are heavenly and eternal.

Use temporal things, but desire eternal.

Thou canst not be satisfied with any temporal goods, because thou wast not created for their enjoyment.

2. Although thou shouldst have all created goods, thou couldst not be happy and blessed ; but in God, who created all things, consists all thy beatitude and happiness.

Not such as is seen or cried up by the foolish lovers of the world, but such as the good faithful of Christ await, and of which they that are spiritual and clean of heart, whose conversation is in heaven, have sometimes a foretaste.

All human comfort is vain and short.

Blessed and true is that comfort which *is derived inwardly from Truth.*

A devout man every where carrieth

about with him Jesus his Comforter saith to Him, Be with me, O Lord in all places and at all times.

Let this be my consolation, thou willing to forego all human comforts.

And if Thy comfort be withdrawn Thy will and just trial be to me the greatest of comforts.

For Thou wilt not always be angry nor wilt Thou threaten for ever.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

God is the centre of our hearts, as Augustine, and we cannot rest till we are united to God; that is, so long as we are attached to ourselves and to creatures, we seek happiness, but it is not to be found, out of God. We must therefore withdraw our hearts from all things but God, and die to all things else, if we would enjoy true happiness, which can only result from an entire dedication of our souls to God. Therefore let us not say, with those of the world, Happy they who possess abundance of all things they desire, and want none of the pleasures of the earth! Rather let us say, Blessed is the heart for which God has made all things, happy the Christian who loves that which he shall love for ever!

PRAYER.

WHEN, O God, shall I become so detached from created objects as to sigh only for the happiness of pleasing and loving Thee? When wilt thou become more to me than all things else, all in all, even as Thou art to the blessed in heaven? Grant that I may deny myself every gratification, and delight only in pleasing Thee. Pains, crosses, and afflictions shall be from henceforth the joy of my soul, or at least the subjects of my patience, because they have been consecrated by Thee, my Jesus! and it is Thy blessed will I should endure them. And if, as I deserve, Thou deprivest me of consolation, grant that humble submission may support me, whilst Thou hidest the light of Thy countenance. Amen.

CHAPTER XVII.

THAT ALL SOLICITUDE MUST BE PLACED IN GOD.

Son, suffer Me to do with thee what I will; I know what is expedient for thee.

Thou thinkest as man; thou judgest *in many things as human affection suggesteth.*

Lord, what Thou sayest is true. Greater is Thy care for me than all the care I can take of myself.

For at too great a hazard doth he stand who casteth not his whole care on Thee.

Lord, provided that my will remain true and firm towards Thee, do with me whatsoever it shall please Thee.

For it cannot but be good, whatever Thou shalt do with me.

2. If Thou wilt have me to be in darkness, be Thou blessed ; and if Thou wilt have me to be in light, be Thou again blessed ; if Thou vouchsafe to comfort me, be Thou blessed ; and if it be Thy will I should be afflicted, be Thou still equally blessed.

3. Son, thus must thou stand affected, if thou desire to walk with Me :

Thou must be as ready to suffer as to rejoice ; thou must be as glad to be poor and needy as to be full and rich.

4. Lord, I will suffer willingly for Thee whatsoever Thou art pleased should befall me.

I am willing indifferently to receive in Thy hand good and evil, sweet and bitter, joy and sorrow, and to give Thee thanks for all that happeneth to me.

Keep me from all sin, and I will fear neither death nor hell.

So that Thou cast me not off for ever, blot me out of the book of life, what calamitation soever befalleth me shall not hurt me.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

To preserve peace in time of trouble, our will must remain firm in God, and be ever directed towards Him, that is, we should be disposed to leave all things from the hand of God, from His justice, and from His bounty, with humble submission to His blessed will. Good and evil, health and sickness, prosperity and adversity, consolation and dryness, temptation and tranquillity, interior sweetness, trials, and chastisements, all should be received by the soul with docility, patience, and resignation, as coming to us by the appointment of God. This is the only way of finding peace in the midst of great troubles and adversities.

PRAYER.

GRANT, O God, that I may rely entirely on Thy power and goodness. Thou canst and wilt assist me: this shall be my support and confidence in the midst of the most grievous afflictions. Keep me from sin, and I am content to suffer all things else. When assailed by violent temptations, and, as it were, in the midst of the shadow of death, I will place my trust in Thee, and fear no evil, because Thou wilt be with me. All I ask, O God, is that my trials may be pleasing to Thee as they are painful to me, that by patient endurance they may become to me the way of penance, and conduct me to salvation. Amen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THAT TEMPORAL MISERIES ARE TO BE BORN WITH
EQUANIMITY AFTER THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

SON, I came down from heaven for thy salvation; I took upon Me thy miseries, not of necessity, but moved thereto by *charity*; that thou mightest learn *patience*, and bear without repining *temporal miseries*.

For from the hour of my birth until I expired upon the cross, I was not without the endurance of grief; moreover, I suffered great want of all earthly things.

I frequently heard many complaints against Me; I meekly bore disgrace and reproaches; for benefits I received ingratitude; for miracles, blasphemies; for heavenly doctrine, reproofs.

2. Lord, because Thou wast patient in my lifetime, herein especially fulfilling the commandment of Thy Father, it is fitting that I, a wretched sinner, should, according to Thy will, bear myself patiently, and, as long as Thou pleassest, support the burden of this corruptible life, in order to my salvation.

For though this present life is felt to be burdensome, yet it is now rendered, through Thy grace, very meritorious; and by Thy example and the footsteps of my saints, more bright and supportable to the weak.

It is also much more full of consolation than it was formerly under the law, when

the gate of heaven remained shut; and even the way to heaven seemed more obscure, when so few concerned themselves to seek the kingdom of heaven.

Moreover too, they who were then just, and to be saved, could not enter into Thy heavenly kingdom before Thy Passion, and the payment of our debt by Thy sacred death.

3. Oh, what great thanks am I bound to render unto Thee, for having vouchsafed to shew me and all the faithfuls, right and good way to Thine everlasting kingdom!

For Thy life is our way; and by holy patience we walk on to Thee, who art our crown.

If Thou hadst not gone before and instructed us, who would have cared to follow?

Alas, how many would have stayed afar off and a great way behind, had they not before their eyes Thy glorious example!

Behold, we are still tepid, notwith

adding all Thy miracles and instructions
 which we have heard ; what, then, would
 be if we had not so great light to follow
 us ?

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

To animate ourselves to suffer in a proper
 manner, we should often think of the Passion of
 our Christ, who suffered the punishment due to
 sins. The afflictions which God sends us are
 added either to prove our fidelity or to punish
 our offences. We should therefore receive
 them with humble submission, and in a truly
 filial spirit ; happy in being allowed to
 witness the justice of God in time, that we may
 contemplate His bounty for eternity. Our great-
 trials are from ourselves. The rebellions of
 our passions, the bitterness of our hearts, our
 continual fretfulness, the wanderings of our
 imagination, and the whole man so opposite to
 duty, would be insupportable did we not fre-
 quently think of the patience with which God
 waits for us, and endeavour to imitate Him who
 waits with our infirmities. Let us, then, be pa-
 tient under sufferings, that so, at the last hour,
 we may enjoy the consolation of having sancti-
 fied the evils of *this life* by a spirit of patience,
thus rendered them most available to salva-

PRAYER.

Can we behold Thee, O Jesus, suffer so much for us, and yet be unwilling to suffer any thing for Thee? Can we believe that we must suffer with Thee on earth, if we would reign with Thee in heaven, and yet resist Thy chastisements or bear them with impatience? Dearest Saviour, give us strength to suffer, and grant that the patience which Thou impartest to us may make us worthy of those eternal rewards which Thou hast promised us in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF SUPPORTING INJURIES; AND WHO IS PROVED
TO BE TRULY PATIENT.

WHAT is it thou sayest, my son? Cease to complain, and consider My passion, and that of the other Saints.

Thou hast not yet resisted unto blood.

Little is it that thou sufferest, in comparison of those who have suffered so much; who have been so strongly tempted, so grievously afflicted, so many ways tried and exercised.

greatest, then, to call to mind
 the sufferings of others, that thou
 mayest easier bear the very little
 thou sufferest.

For thee they seem not little, take
 this also proceed from thy im-

Whether they be little or great,
 bear them all with patience.

It is better thou disposest thyself
 rightly, the more wisely dost thou
 receive more dost thou merit; and
 bear it more easily if both in
 by habit thou art diligently
 hereto.

For say, I cannot endure these
 in such a man, and things of this
 sort to be suffered by me, for he
 does me a great injury, and he up-
 on me with things I never thought
 will suffer willingly from an-
 as far as I shall judge fitting
 suffer.

*Thought is foolish, which con-
 the virtue of patience nor by*

whom it shall be crowned; but not weigheth the persons, and the office committed.

He is not a truly patient man who suffer nothing, only so much as he think fit, and from whom he pleaseth.

The truly patient man mindeth not what manner of man it is he is exercising whether by his own Superior, whether an equal, or an inferior; whether by good and holy man, or by one that perverse and unworthy.

But how much soever and how oft soever any adversity happeneth to him from any creature, he taketh it all equal with thanksgiving as from the hand of God, and esteemeth it a great gain.

For with God not any thing, how trifling soever, suffered for God's sake, shall go unrewarded.

4. Be thou, therefore, prepared to fight if thou desirest to gain the victory.

Without conflict thou canst not attain the crown of patience.

If thou wilt not suffer, thou refuse

be crowned ; but if thou desirest to be crowned, fight manfully, and endure patiently.

Without labour there is no coming to rest, nor without fighting do we arrive at victory.

5. Make, O Lord, that possible to me by grace, which seemeth impossible to me by nature.

Thou knowest how little I can bear, and that I am soon dejected when a small adversity ariseth.

Let all exercises of tribulation become to me very and most desirable to me for Thy sake ; for to suffer and to be afflicted for Thee is very healthful for my

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

1. The practice of patience consists, first, in regarding all misfortunes as coming from the hand of God ; 2dly, in bearing all things with resignation, in never murmuring under contradiction ; 3dly, in believing that, having deserved nothing, *one can do us wrong or injustice* ; 4thly, in *living only of ourselves* ; 5thly, in not *letting the heart be full* ; 6thly, in thank-

ing God for evil as well as for good, in frequently saying with holy David, *and the Lord hath taken His holy Name.* Such is the prayer which is so necessary for salvation, and so rare among Christians; for almost no one but who suffers much, yet who prays, they ought.

Long and constant patience in the midst of difficulties is a penitential and efficacious way of effacing sin, which, when God will, we may hope He will not

PRAYER.

GRANT, O my Saviour, that I may be able to bear with me and suffering, and that I may be a model and principle of my prayer for Thee; and that, entering into my salvation, which Thou wilt give me by the good use I make of a free will, I may receive all things with humble and holy will. Amen.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CONFESSION OF OUR OWN INFIRMITY, AND
OF THE MISERIES OF THIS LIFE.

ALL confess against myself my in-
; I will confess to Thee, O Lord, my
mity.

is oftentimes a small thing which
eth me down and troubleth me.

purpose to behave myself valiantly;
when a small temptation cometh, I
brought into great straits.

is sometimes a very trifling thing
nce a grievous temptation proceed-

nd when I think myself somewhat
, when I least apprehend it, I find my-
sometimes almost overcome by a
t blast.

. Behold, then, O Lord, my abjection
frailty, every way known to Thee.

lave pity on me, and draw me out of
mire, that I stick not fast therein, that
v not be utterly cast down for ever.

This it is which often drives me back, and confounds me in Thy sight, that I am so subject to fall, and so powerless to resist my passions.

And although I do not altogether consent, yet their assaults are troublesome and grievous to me; and I am weary of thus always living in conflict.

Hence my infirmity is made known to me; because abominable imaginations much more easily rush in upon me than they forsake me.

3. Oh, that Thou, most mighty God of Israel, zealous Lover of faithful souls, wouldst regard the labour and sorrow of Thy servant, and stand by him in all his undertakings!

Strengthen me with heavenly fortitude, lest the old man, the miserable flesh not fully subdued to the spirit, prevail and get the upper hand; against which we must battle so long as we breathe in this most wretched life.

Alas, what kind of life is this, where afflictions and miseries are never wanting.

where all things are full of snares and enemies !

For when one tribulation or temptation is gone, another approacheth ; yea, and whilst the first conflict still lasteth, many others come on, and those unexpected.

4. And how is it possible that the life of man can be loved, which hath so great bitterness, and is subject to so many calamities and miseries ?

How even can it be called life, which generateth so many deaths and plagues ?

And yet it is loved, and many seek their delight in it.

The world is censured as deceitful and vain ; and yet it is with reluctance abandoned, because the concupiscence of the flesh too much prevails.

But some things draw us to love the world ; others to despise it.

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and pride of life, draw us to the love of the world ; but the pains and miseries which justly follow these things breed a *red and loathing* of the world.

5. But, alas, evil delights prevail over a mind that is given to the world; and under thorns she imagineth there are delights; because she hath neither seen, nor tasted the sweetness of God, nor the eternal pleasure of virtue.

But such as perfectly despise the world, and study to live to God under holy discipline, they are not unconscious of the divine sweetness promised to those who forsake all; and they clearly see both how grievously the world is mistaken, and in how many ways it is deceived.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

It is not sufficient to know and to feel our weaknesses and miseries, and our continual danger of perishing eternally by yielding to our passions; we should also at the sight of them humble ourselves before God, and place our whole confidence in Him. We should incessantly bewail our exile, and cast and support ourselves upon the bounty of God. We should never remain in the state of sin, tepidity, or infidelity in which our weakness too often engages us, but immediately arise after we have fallen, and speedily return to our heavenly Father when we find we have gone astray.

his life is so replete with temptations, pains, miseries, that it becomes insupportable to a that loves God, and is afraid of offending . How shall I live, does it exclaim, and not yet how shall I sin and still live ! to be ever ing, and then rising again ; ever resisting my ions, and fighting against the irregular de- of my heart, is this life ! It is continual h. But let us not grow weary of repressing, ghting, and conquering our predominant pas- sions, for in this consists the merit of a super- ral life, of a life conducting to eternal happi-

PRAYER.

ACKNOWLEDGE, O God, that life, would be satisfactory had I no trial of suffering for Thy . Grant, therefore, that, when weary of self, and fatigued with the miseries of this I may commit them all to Thy most merci- providence. Support me by Thy bounty, and me patience and fidelity to endure myself, to suffer whatever thou shalt appoint. Amen.

to be free, and to see how swe
O Lord my God?

When shall I fully collect
Thee, that through Thy love
feel myself, but Thee alone
feeling and measure, in a
known to all?

But now I often lament, and
grief, my unhappiness.

Because many evils happen
of miseries, which frequently
afflict me, and cast a cloud over
do they hinder and distract me
entangle me, so that I can n
free access to Thee, nor enjoy
embraces, which are ever prese
ed spirits.

Oh, let my sighs move The
my manifold desolation upon

4. O Jesus, Brightness of et
Comfort of the pilgrim soul, v
my mouth without voice, and
speaketh to Thee.

How long doth my Lord del
Let Him come to me, His

me joyful. Let Him stretch
hand, and deliver me, wretched,
anguish.

oh, come, for without Thee I can
e one joyful day nor hour; for
my joy, and without Thee my
empty.

niserable, and in a manner im
and weighed down with fetters,
the light of Thy presence Thou
t me, givest me liberty, and
ne Thy friendly countenance.

others seek, instead of Thee,
else they please; but nothing
while doth or shall please me,
my God, my hope, my eternal

not hold my peace, nor will I
pray, till Thy grace return, and
ast interiorly to me:

old, here I am; behold, I come
ecause thou hast called Me.

ars, and the desire of thy soul,
liation and contrition of heart,
ed and brought Me to thee.

7. And I said, O Lord, I
upon Thee, and have desired to
and am prepared to reject
Thy sake.

For Thou didst first stir me
should seek Thee.

Be Thou therefore blessed
who hath shewed this good
servant, according to the multi-
mercies.

What more hath Thy servant
Thy presence, but to humble
ceedingly before Thee, mindful
his own iniquity and vileness.

For there is none like unto Thee
all the wonders of heaven and

Thy works are exceedingly
judgments true, and by Thy
the universe is ruled.

Praise, therefore, and glory
O Wisdom of the Father; let
my soul, and all things created
praising and blessing Thee.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

ould prefer God before all things ; that
ould labour to forsake and renounce our-
all things, die to all self-satisfaction and
elves many lawful pleasures, to punish
for having indulged in those which are

We should submit, give up, and im-
rselfes to God, rise superior to all
ings, direct our hearts towards Him, and
lves in His perfections ; keep ourselves
of sovereign and interior adoration, to
should yield ; and by our actions, by
ice of every thing that is dear to us,
Him the absolute master and God of
a To love God, so as to delight only
indeed a heaven upon earth, and, as it
oretaste of a happy eternity ; but to
this, we must disengage ourselves from
usements of the mind which dissipate
draw it from God, and from those at-
of the heart which bind it to creatures ;
he soul, being free from itself and from
tude of the passions, may take the
the dove, fly away towards God, and
Him alone.

PRAYER.

*my sovereign good, and only consola-
re I raise myself towards Thee, draw*

Thee to myself, and firmly unite myself to I who am filled, penetrated, and loaded with many miseries, irregular inclinations to evil, and continual repugnance to good; I am every moment falling from Thee to it and from myself into sin; in a word, I who with so many obstacles within myself, which a wall of separation, would hinder me from united to Thee? But what, O Lord, is impossible to me, is easy to Thee; in Thy power bounty I place all my hopes. Thou knowest my condition, and if Thou wilt Thou canst assist me. I groan incessantly under the load of my iniquities. I address myself to Thee to be delivered from them by Thy mercy. I find no rest nor content nor happiness but in and by Thee. Come then, O God, give consolation and strength to my soul, which desires only Thee, to live by and for its God. I languish and am consumed with the desire of possessing Thee without fear of ever losing Thee. Reject me not, infinitely amiable God! for I can no longer be separated and removed at a distance from Thee. Amen.

CHAPTER XXII.

OF THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE MANIFOLD BENEFITS OF GOD.

OPEN, O Lord, my heart in Thy law, and teach me to walk in Thy commandments.

Give me to understand Thy will, and to commemorate with great reverence and diligent consideration all Thy benefits, as well in general as in particular, that so henceforward I may be able worthily to return thanks for them.

I know, and confess, indeed, that I am not able to return Thee due thanks of praise, not even for the least.

I am less than any of Thy benefits bestowed upon me; and when I consider Thy excellency, my spirit fainteth before the greatness thereof.

2. All things that we have in soul and body, and whatsoever outwardly or inwardly, *naturally* or *supernaturally*, we possess, are Thy benefits, and celebrate

Thy bounty, mercy, and goodness, from whom we have received all good.

Although one hath received more, another less, yet all are Thine, and without Thee even the least cannot be had.

He who hath received greater things cannot glory of his own merit, not extol himself above others, nor insult over the lesser; because he is indeed greater and better, who attributeth less to himself, and is more humble and devout in returning thanks.

And he who esteemeth himself the vilest of all men, and judgeth himself the most unworthy, is fitted to receive still greater blessings.

3. But he who hath received fewer ought not to be saddened, nor take it ill, nor envy him that is more enriched; but attend rather to Thee, and very much praise Thy goodness, for that Thou bestowest Thy gifts so plentifully, so freely and willingly, without acceptance of persons.

All things are from Thee, and therefore thou art to be praised in all.

Thou knowest what is expedient to be given to each; and why this one hath less, and the other more, is not ours to decide, but Thine, with whom are determined the merits of each.

4. Wherefore, O Lord God, I deem it great benefit not to have much which outwardly and according to men might appear praiseworthy and glorious; so that person, considering his own poverty and meanness, ought to be so far from conceiving thereat despondency, or sadness, or dejection, that he should rather take consolation and great joy.

For Thou, O God, hast chosen the poor and the humble, and those that are despised by this world, for Thy familiar friends and domestics.

Thy Apostles themselves are witnesses, whom Thou hast appointed rulers over the whole earth.

And yet they lived in this world without complaint, so humble and simple,

without any malice or gu even rejoiced to suffer repr Name; and what things t from, those they embraced fection.

5. Nothing, therefore, ou great a joy to one that lov knoweth Thy benefits as th ment of Thy will in himsel pleasure of Thy eternal ap

With which he ought to tented and comforted as to to be the least as any one be the greatest; to enjoy a and content in the lowest highest; and to be as willi picable and mean and of repute, as to be more honc greater rank in the world t

For Thy will and the lov our ought to take precedenc and to comfort and please any benefits whatsoever wh or can be given.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

HAPPY the soul that is little in its own eyes, is as content to be below all men, as others desirous to be above them; that makes its it and delight consist in being unknown, ab-; and despised, and longs as ardently to me the reproach and the outcast of the ld, as others do to be esteemed and honoured t. Such a soul is after God's own heart; it reat in the eyes of His majesty, and by its ility renders itself worthy of His greatest ea. To arrive at this degree of perfection, must love an abject and hidden life, do noth- for the sake of esteem or praise, cheerfully ive contempt and adversity as our due; ac- with humble submission, blame, contradic- , and calumny, and nourish ourselves with oaches in imitation of Jesus Christ; esteem- it our greatest honour thus to resemble Him.

PRAYER.

WHEN, O my Saviour, shall the esteem of men, the honour of the world, become, as they it to be, the disdain and the dread of my ; humiliation and contempt, its joy and de- ? Grant that the love which Thou hadst ontempt, Thou who art the adoration of the els, may be the motive and the rule of my *nce in bearing with it*, who have deserved *some the eternal object of Thy hatred and ction.* Amen.

CHAPTER XVI.

OF FOUR THINGS WHICH BRING MU

SON, now will I teach thee t
peace and of true liberty.

2. Do, Lord, as Thou sayest,
be very glad to hear it.

3. Study, My son, to do rath
of another than thy own.

Ever choose rather to have
more.

Always seek the lowest pla
be subject to every one.

Desire always and pray that
God may be entirely fulfilled in

Behold, such a one entereth
borders of peace and rest.

4. Lord, this Thy short ad
taineth in itself much perfection

It is short in words, but full in
and abounding in fruit.

If I could but faithfully ob
should not be so easily trouble

For as often as I find myse

and disturbed, I am sensible it is because I have gone back from this doctrine.

But Thou, O Lord, who canst do all things, and always lovest the profit of the soul, increase in me a greater grace, that I may fulfil this Thy word and accomplish my salvation.

A PRAYER,

AGAINST EVIL THOUGHTS

5. O Lord my God, depart not far from me; O my God, have regard to help me: for divers evil thoughts have risen up against me, and great fears afflict my soul.

How shall I pass through them without hurt? how shall I break them in pieces?

6. I, saith He, will go before thee, and will humble the great ones of the earth.

I will open the gates of the prison, and will reveal to thee hidden secrets.

7. Do, Lord, as Thou sayest, and let all wicked thoughts fly from before Thy face.

This is my hope and my only comfort,

to fly to Thee in all tribulation
in Thee, to call on Thee in
inmost heart, and patiently
consolation.

A PRAYER,

FOR THE ENLIGHTENING OF

8. Enlighten me, O God, with
the brightness of internal light,
and drive off all darkness from the depths
of my heart.

Restrain my many wanderings,
and destroy the temptations
that assault me.

Fight strongly for me,
these evil beasts,—I mean,
concupiscences,—that peace
in Thy power, and the abundant
praise may resound in Thy temple,
that is, in a clean conscience.

Command the winds and the sea,
Be still; to thee alone do we
Blow thou not; and there shall be
calm.

9. Send forth Thy light

may shine upon the earth; for
 earth that is empty and void, till
 lightenest me.

Thy grace from above; water
 with the dew of heaven; supply
 of devotion, to irrigate the
 earth, to bring forth good and
 it.

my mind, oppressed with the
 is, and raise my whole desires
 heavenly things; that having
 sweetness of supernal happi-
 ay have no pleasure in thinking
 of earth.

ch me away, and rescue me
 stable comfort of creatures; for
 thing can fully quiet and satisfy

to Thyself with an inseparable
 ve; for Thou alone art sufficient
 ul that loveth Thee, and with-
 all other things are frivolous.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

can escape the sight or the justice
 should, in the first place, keep a

continual watch over ourselves, never allow ourselves any thing to please God ; 3dly, we should be in His presence, and do all things with a view to pleasing Him, follow on all the operations of His grace, never resist, but defer its accomplishment for as long as there may be no interval between willing, and performing what He wills. Nothing is so agreeable to God as to trust in all things to Him, to trust in all things to ourselves entirely to Him, and to rely completely upon Him. Happy to receive all from His hands, to do all things to His holy will, wills of God, and wills all that happens to Him, and ordains it.

PRAYER.

EACH day do I ask of Thee, that all that will may be done on earth as in Heaven. Hearken to my prayer, I beseech Thee, that I may perform all my actions according to Thy holy will, and ever abide in the rule of my conduct. Deliver me from the slavery of its passions. Grant me to yield to Thy empire, and that Thy will may ever be the predominant soul. Amen.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF AVOIDING CURIOUS INQUIRY RESPECTING THE
LIFE OF OTHERS.

Be not curious, and give not way to
cares.

Is it this or that to thee? follow
me.

What is it to thee whether that man
is or such, or whether this man do
ask this or that?

Thou dost not need to answer for
me, but thou shalt for thyself give an
account: why, therefore, dost thou med-
dle with them?

I would, I know all men, and see all
that are done under the sun; and
how it is with every one, what he
wishes, what he would have, and at what
attention aims.

Alas, therefore, are all things to be
examined; but do thou keep thyself in
peace; and let the unquiet be as un-
to thee as he will.

Whatsoever he shall do or say, will come upon himself, because he cannot deceive Me.

Be not solicitous for the shadow of a great name, nor for acquaintance with many, nor for the particular love of individuals.

For these things generate distractions and great darkness in the heart.

I would gladly speak My word to thee, and reveal My secrets, if thou wouldst diligently observe My coming, and open to Me the door of thy heart.

Be circumspect, and watch in prayer, and humble thyself in all things.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

In order to enjoy true peace, we must, in the first place, avoid all curiosity as to what regards our neighbour; 2dly, we must receive with patience all the afflictions which arise either from the justice of God, or the injustice of man; 3dly, we must suffer and accustom ourselves to the privation of all joy and consolation; sacrifice to God all the pleasures of our mind, heart, and senses; and thank Him for not permitting us to find any real satisfaction but in Him.

PRAYER.

I PLEDGE, O God, that my only desire
is the knowledge of Thy will, and I shall so continue until death;
Thou hast pardoned me my sins, and
Thou wilt grant me that greatest of all
graces, final perseverance. But I will re-
sist to Thee, I will sacrifice this se-
lf-will hope from Thy pure bounty, this
all graces. Amen.

CHAPTER XXV.

TRUE PEACE OF THE HEART AND TRUE
PROGRESS DOOTH CONSIST.

As I have said, Peace I leave to you,
I give to you; not as the world
gives to you.

All desire; but all care not for
things which appertain to true

Peace is with the humble and meek
Thy peace shall be in much pa-

If thou wilt hear Me, and follow My voice, thou mayest enjoy much peace.

2. What, then, shall I do, Lord?

3. In every thing attend to thyself; what thou art doing, and what thou art saying; and direct thy whole attention to this, that thou mayest please Me alone, and neither desire nor seek any thing out of Me.

And as for the sayings or doings of others, judge nothing rashly, neither busy thyself with things not committed to thy care; and thus may it be brought about, that thou shalt be little or seldom disturbed.

But never to feel any grief at all, nor to suffer any trouble of heart or body, is not the state of this present life, but of everlasting rest.

Think not, therefore, that thou hast found true peace, if thou feel no burden; nor that then all is well, if thou have no adversary; nor that thou hast attained to perfection, if all things be done according to thy inclination.

Neither do thou conceive a great notion of thyself, or imagine thyself to be especially beloved, if thou experience great devotion and sweetness: for it is not in such things as these that a true lover of virtue is known; nor doth the progress and perfection of a man consist in these things.

4. In what, then, O Lord?

5. In offering thyself with thy whole heart to the Divine will; not seeking the things that are thine either in little or great, either in time or in eternity.

So that with the same equal countenance thou continue giving thanks both in prosperity and adversity, weighing all things in an equal balance.

If thou come to be so valiant and long-suffering in hope, that when interior comfort is withdrawn, thou canst prepare thy heart to suffer still more; and dost not justify thyself, as if thou oughtest not to suffer such and so great things, but acknowledgest Me to be just in all My appointments, and praisest My holy name; then thou walkest in the true and right way of

tempt or thyself, know that
shalt enjoy an abundance of
much as is possible in this t
sojourn.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

WE should sacrifice ourselves ent
will of God, and meet with equanimi
He decrees for us ; that is, we should,
nothing which is not the will of God
should not refuse any of the adversiti
us ; 3dly, we should bring ourselves t
perfect self-contempt, so as to recei
tions and contradictions as our due
should remain firm, constant, and fait
God desires of us. although we exp

that my salvation can never be more secure than when intrusted to Thee, my Saviour.

Grant, therefore, that I may live under Thine eyes and in Thy hands, in a reverential and continual remembrance of Thy presence, and an exact dependence upon Thy holy will, being assured that Thou wilt promote my salvation in proportion as I endeavour to please and love Thee, and to mortify and hate myself. Amen.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OF THE EXCELLENCE OF A FREE MIND, WHICH DEVOUT PRAYER RATHER MERITETH THAN READING.

LORD, this is the work of a perfect man, never to let the mind slacken from attending to heavenly things, and amidst many cares to pass on as it were without care; not after the manner of an indolent person, but by a certain prerogative of a free mind, not cleaving with an inordinate affection to any thing created.

2. *Preserve me, I beseech thee, O most merciful Lord God, from the cares of this life, that I be not too much entangled by*

down.

I do not say from those things worldly vanity covets with so muchness; but from those miseries, which the common curse of our mortality weigh down and keep back from Thy servant from entering as it pleaseth into liberty of spirit.

3. O my God, unspeakable sweet turn for me into bitterness all carnal consolation, which withdraweth me from love of things eternal, and wicketh me to itself, by setting before some delightful present good

instead of all worldly con-
most sweet unction of Thy
instead of carnal love, infuse
love of Thy Name.

! eating, drinking, clothing,
ecessaries appertaining to the
he body, are burdensome to
pirit.

t I may use such necessary
h moderation, and not be en-
any inordinate affection.

wful to cast them all away,
ust be sustained; but to re-
uities, and such things as are
ight, Thy holy law forbiddeth;
the flesh would grow insolent
pirit.

I beseech Thee, let Thy hand
teach me, that I may in no

AOITICAL REFLECTIONS.

ation of the senses, and the vic-
wn humours, are so essential for
n truth, the soul which gives it-
objects, and is often more en-

gaged upon itself than upon God, is totally unworthy of Him; because, when it gives itself to its passions, it can have no desire to please God. Ah! how will it change its ideas and sentiments at the hour of death! when alone with God it shall hear from Him this reproach: I have not been thine in time, I will not be thine for eternity! Thou hast preferred the pleasures of sense to the happiness of pleasing Me; it is just thou shouldst now be consigned to all the horrors of a miserable eternity! *Thou didst receive good things in thy life-time*, was it said to the rich man when he complained in hell of the rigour of his torments; and so will it one day be said to those sensual souls who will not now restrain nor mortify themselves in any thing, unless they endeavour to prefer the happiness of eternity to the pleasures of time, and, to merit heaven by self-control.

PRAYER.

GRANT me, O God, strength and courage to restrain the desires of my heart, that I may be free to possess Thee; grant that, renouncing all sensual gratifications, I may become pleasing and acceptable to Thee; happy in sacrificing all that can give me pleasure, for the sake of pleasing Thee, and in spending my life in repairing Thy past displeasure by penance, and in preventing it for the future by fidelity. O penance, who

hast thou for a soul that is penetrated
by the love of God, and is resolved to avenge
itself to punish itself! Amen.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LE-LOVE CHIEFLY KEEPETH US BACK FROM
THE SOVEREIGN GOOD.

1, thou must give all for all, and be
g of thy own.

w that the love of thyself is more
to thee than any thing of the

ry thing, according to the love and
tion which thou hast to it, cleaveth
more or less.

y love be pure, simple, and well-
l, thou shalt not be in captivity to
ing.

et not that which thou mayest not

: not to have that which may em-
thee and deprive thee of thy in-
erty.

It is wonderful that thou
the very bottom of thy heart
thyself wholly to Me, with
thou canst desire or have

2. Why dost thou pine
grief? why art thou so
fluorous cares?

Be resigned to My good will
thou shalt suffer no loss.

If thou seekest this or
be here or there for thine
sake, and the more to
will, thou wilt never be
from solicitude; for in
will be found some defect
place there will be some
cross thee.

3. Thy welfare, therefore
obtaining and multiplying
things, but rather in
and utterly rooting them
which I would not have thee
only with regard to me
but also with regard to
honour, and the desire

which things pass away with the


place avails little, if the spirit of
 be wanting; neither shall that
 stand long which is sought from
 out, if the state of thy heart want the
 foundation, that is, if thou stand not
 : thou mayest change, but shalt not
 thyself.

; when occasion offers and is laid
 off, thou shalt find that which thou
 fly from, and more.

A PRAYER,

THE CLEANSING OF THE HEART, AND
 FOR HEAVENLY WISDOM.

Confirm me, O God, by the grace
 of Holy Spirit. Grant me power to
 enghthened in the inner man, and to
 out of my heart all unprofitable care
 ouble; not to be drawn away with
 as desires of any thing whatsoever,
 vile or precious, but to view all
as passing away, and myself also
ing with them.



that I may learn above all things
Thee and to find Thee; above
to relish Thee and to love Thee
understand all other things as
according to the order of Thy will

Grant that I may prudently
that flattereth me, and patiently
him that contradicteth me.

For this is great wisdom, to
moved with every wind of word
give ear to the wicked, flattered
for thus shall we go on secure
way we have begun.

hearts, so that He may dispose of all that we have and are according to His holy will ; we must live in a state of dependence and docility to the motions of His grace.

We devote ourselves thus to God without reserve the true means of possessing Him and living with Him. But, alas ! how few give themselves wholly to Him ! and how many are His only by dividing their hearts between Him and themselves, and love themselves while they profess to love Him, although they are well aware that such division is injurious to Him, and hinders Him from reigning absolutely in their hearts, of which He cannot be the master if He be not the possessor ; nor reign as God within them, if He be not alone and be preferred before all else.

PRAYER.

Do not divide my heart, O Lord, which was given wholly for Thee, which is entirely the work of Thy hands, and the price of Thy blood, to be devoted to any other but Thee, or to love any creature equally or in preference to Thee. Thy will is to be with the children of men, and not Thy presence my felicity. Why art Thou so dear to me than all things else, Thou art my only and sovereign good ! I am devoted henceforth absolutely to love Thee I will be all Thine, seek to please Thee always, and breathe only Thy love. Amen.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AGAINST THE TONGUES OF DETRACTORS.

SON, take it not to heart if some people think ill of thee, and say of thee what thou art not willing to hear.

Thou oughtest to think worse things of thyself, and to believe no one weaker than thyself.

If thou walkest interiorly, thou wilt make small account of flying words from without.

It is no small prudence to be silent in the evil time, and to turn within to Me, and not to be disturbed with the judgment of man.

2. Let not thy peace depend on the tongues of men: for whether they put a good or bad construction on what thou dost, thou art still what thou art.

Where is true peace or true glory? is it not in Me?

And he who neither desireth to please

feareth to displease men shall enjoy
ch peace.

From inordinate love and vain fear
seth all disquiet of heart and distrac-
on of the senses.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

Nothing is so apt to give us uneasiness and trouble as the judgments and observations of others concerning us. We consider it a happiness to please men, and a misfortune to meet with their contempt; and yet what is the esteem or the frown of the world but a shadow, a smoke, a vapour which passes away, and adds nothing to what we really are or ought to be? Whatever we are in the eyes of God, so much are we and no more, and therefore we should make no account of the favourable or mean opinions of others.

O human respect! when wilt thou give place to the reverence which we owe to God? Alas! how do human considerations destroy in us all that is pleasing to Him! Instead of inquiring what will be most pleasing to Jesus Christ, we think only of what others will say of us. But is it not better to obey God rather than men, to please Him *rather than* to please the world? *Why then do we not endeavour to do so?*

tant sense of Thy presence and of Thy
induce me to perform all my actions, and
to suffer all things, for Thy love. O Lord
and my Judge, unite my heart to Thee,
dread of displeasing Thee, and a desire
always agreeable in Thy sight. Growing
dying incessantly to myself, I may live
Thee, and by often renewing my im-
pleasing Thee, succeed in gaining
Grant that I may so accustom myself
Thee during life, that the last moti-
heart may be a fervent act of my love.
Amen.

fly to Thee ; that Thou mayest help me,
and turn it to my good.

Lord, I am now in tribulation, and my
heart is not at ease ; but I am much af-
fected with my present suffering.

And now, beloved Father, what shall I
say ? I am taken, Lord, in these straits ;
save me from this hour.

But for this reason I came unto this
hour, that Thou mightest be glorified,
when I shall have been exceedingly hum-
bled, and delivered by Thee.

May it please Thee, O Lord, to deliver
me ; for, poor wretch that I am ! what
can I do and whither shall I go without
Thee ?

Give me patience, O Lord, even at this
time.

Help me, O my God, and I will not
fail, how much soever I may be distressed.

2. And now, in the midst of these
trials, what shall I say ? Lord, Thy will
be done : I have well deserved to be af-
fected and distressed.

It behooves me to bear it ; and would

that it were with patience, till the storm pass over, and it grow better.

But Thy almighty hand is able to take away from me this temptation also, and to moderate its violence, that I sink not altogether under it; as Thou hast often done heretofore for me, O my God, my mercy!

And how much the more difficult this is to me, so much the easier to Thee is this change of the right hand of the Most High.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

TEMPTATIONS must ever be resisted with firmness and constancy; and, that we may be able to overcome them, we must go with confidence to the throne of God. He often permits us to be so hard pressed, and so weighed down by the load of our miseries, as to leave us no other means of making resistance and maintaining our ground, but that of keeping ourselves closely united to Him, and relying upon Him for the assistance of His grace. The fewer resources we find within ourselves, the more should we be induced to seek for them in God, and when temptation has nearly overcome us, and we are in danger of yielding, cry out with the Apostles,

Lord, save us, or we perish; our eyes are raised up to Thee, who art our Father and our God, able and willing to assist us, our Saviour and Redeemer, engaged to rescue and to save us. The more I experience my own weakness and inability, the more do I hope for strength from Thee. It is Thy glory and Thy delight to defend me, for my soul is the work of Thy hands, and the price of Thy precious blood.

PRAYER.

We are sensible, O Lord, that without Thee, of ourselves, in the time of temptation, we should lose courage, yield to sin, and be vanquished; but we know also that Thou canst do all things, and art willing to assist and to save us. Penetrated with a sense of our own miseries, yet full of confidence in Thy mercy, we place ourselves in Thy hands, repose all our hopes in Thee, trust in Thy bounty, renounce whatever is displeasing to Thee, and desire only the accomplishment of Thy will. Grant us the grace of living and dying in these holy dispositions; and may they ever induce Thee to show us Thy mercy. Amen.

CHAPTER XXX.

OF ASKING THE DIVINE ASSISTANCE, AND OF CONFIDENCE OF RECOVERING GRACE.

SON, I am the Lord, who giveth strength in the day of tribulation.

Come to Me when it is not well with thee.

This is that which most of all hindereth heavenly comfort, that thou art too slow in betaking thyself to prayer.

For before thou earnestly prayest to Me, thou seekest in the mean time many comforts, and delightest thyself in outward things.

And hence it comes that all things avail thee little, till thou consider well that I am He who delivereth those that trust in Me; nor is there out of Me any powerful help, nor profitable counsel, nor lasting remedy.

But now having recovered thy spirit after the storm, grow thou strong again, in the light of My mercies; for I am at hand, saith the Lord, to repair all, not only

o the full, but even with abundance and above measure.

2. Is any thing difficult to Me? Or shall I be like to one promising and not performing?

Where is thy faith? Stand firmly and perseveringly; practise endurance and manly courage; comfort will come to thee in due season.

Wait for Me, wait; I will come and reward thee.

It is a temptation that troubleth thee, and a vain fear that affrighteth thee.

What doth the solicitude about future contingencies bring thee, but only sorrow upon sorrow? sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

It is vain and useless to conceive either grief or joy for future things, which perhaps shall never come to pass.

3. But it is in human nature to be deluded with such imaginations; and it is the sign of a soul as yet weak to be so easily drawn away by the suggestions of the enemy.

For he careth not whether it be with things true or false that he abuseth and deceiveth thee; whether he overflow thee with the love of things present or the fear of things to come.

Let not therefore thy heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Believe thou in Me, and trust in My mercy.

When thou thinkest I am far from thee, I am often nearest to thee.

When thou judgest that almost all is lost, then oftentimes it is that thou art in the way of the greatest gain of merit.

All is not lost when any thing falls out contrary to what thou wouldst have it.

Thou must not judge according to thy present feeling, nor give thyself up in such manner to any trouble, whencesoever it comes, nor take it so as if all hope of deliverance were gone.

4. Think not thyself wholly forsaken, though for a time I have sent thee some tribulation, or withdrawn from thee thy

wished-for consolation; for this is the way
to the kingdom of heaven.

And without doubt it is more expedient
for thee and for the rest of My servants,
that you be exercised in adversity, than
that you should have all things according
to your inclination.

I know thy most hidden thoughts, and
that it is very expedient for thy salvation
that thou sometimes be left without any
favour of sweetness, lest perchance thou
be puffed up with good success, and take
complacency in thyself, imagining thyself
to be what thou art not.

What I have given, I have the power to
take away, and restore as it pleaseth Me.

5. When I have given it, it is still
mine; when I withdraw it again, I take
not any thing that is thine; for every best
gift and perfect gift is Mine.

If I send thee affliction or any adversity,
repine not, neither let thy heart be cast
down.

*I can quickly raise thee up again, and
turn all thy burden into joy.*

Nevertheless, I am just, and greatly to be praised, when I thus deal with thee.

6. If thou thinkest rightly, and considerest things in truth, thou oughtest never to be so much dejected and troubled at adversity.

But thou shouldst rather rejoice and give thanks, yea, account this as a special subject of joy, that afflicting thee with sorrows I do not spare thee.

“As the Father hath loved Me, I also love you,” said I to My beloved disciples; whom certainly I did not send to temporal joys, but to great conflicts; not to honours, but to contempt; not to idleness, but to labours; not to rest, but to bring forth much fruit in patience. Remember thou these words, O my son.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

I AM the Lord, saith the Almighty, by the mouth of one of His Prophets, who give strength to souls in the day of trouble, and deliver those from danger who put their trust in Me. How consoling, how encouraging and supporting, are these words to a soul that, in the time of temp-

tation and adversity, is faithful and constant to what God requires of it! This is what the Scripture calls to wait for and to support the Lord.

Believe in Me, says our blessed Saviour, and thy heart shall not be troubled nor fear. Wherefore, upon occasion of interior or exterior affliction, we should, in the first place, have recourse to God with confidence; 2dly, we should resign ourselves to His blessed will; 3dly, we should not neglect any of our spiritual exercises; 4thly, we should subdue ourselves, restrain and renounce ourselves in all things, that we may act in concert with God; 5thly, we should consider it our welfare and our merit to be afflicted, tormented, and, as it were, annihilated for the honour of God's majesty; 6thly, we should be content to carry a crucified heart, a heart suffering and penetrated with bitterness and sorrow, in imitation of our crucified Jesus.

PRAYER.

No, Lord, I will not give up all as lost, when Thou seemest to withdraw Thyself from me; but, on the contrary, I will believe all gained when my soul, though sinking under fatigue, and withered with bitterness, shall resign itself to Thy holy will, and live only in Thee, saying with the Prophet, *I commit to Thee all my strength, for my soul is in Thy hands, and Thy mercy sup-*

ports and encourages my heart to profit by the sense of my miseries. Abandon me not, O God, to the disorder of my passions, but be Thou their master by Thy grace, and keep me always in the possession of Thy love. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OF THE CONTEMPT OF EVERY THING CREATED, IN
ORDER TO FIND THE CREATOR.

DISCIPLE. Lord, I stand much in need of a grace yet greater, if I must arrive so far that it may not be in the power of any man nor any thing created to hinder me.

For as long as any thing holds me back, I cannot freely fly to Thee.

He was desirous to fly freely to Thee who said, "Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?"

What can be more at rest than a simple eye?

And what can be more free than he who desires nothing upon earth?

A man ought, therefore, to soar over

ve every thing created, and perfectly
 make himself, and in ecstasy of mind
 stand and see that Thou, the Creator
 art, hast nothing like to Thee among
 creatures.

And unless a man be disengaged from
 things created, he cannot freely attend
 things divine.

And this is the reason why there are
 so few contemplative persons, be-
 cause there are few that know how to
 abstract themselves entirely from perish-
 ing creatures.

For this a great grace is required,
 as may elevate the soul, and lift her
 above herself.

And unless a man be elevated in spirit,
 freed from attachment to all creatures,
 wholly united to God, whatever he
 has, and whatever he has, is of no great
 importance.

For a long time shall he be little, and
 travelling beneath, who esteems any
 thing great but only the one, immense,
 and Good.

man, and the knowledge of a studious cleric.

Far more noble is that less flows from above from the presence, than that which is laboured by the industry of man.

3. Many are found to desire elevation, but they are not careful to pursue those things which are required for attainment.

It is also a great impediment to rest so much upon signs and things, and have but little of

on of mind on our own inward comments.

Alas, after a slight recollection, we instantly break forth again; neither do we weigh well our works by a strict examination.

Where our affections lie, we take no notice; and how impure is our every action we do not deplore.

Because all flesh had corrupted its way, therefore the great deluge followed.

Since, therefore, our interior affection is much corrupted, it must needs be that the emotion which follows, which is a testimony of the want of inward vigour, should be corrupted.

From a pure heart proceedeth the fruit of good life.

How much a man hath done is introduced into; but with how much virtue is not so studiously weighed. We ask whether he be strong, rich, handsome, clever, a good writer, a good workman; but how poor *in spirit, how patient and meek,*

Nature is often in error ;
hath her trust in God, that s
not be deceived.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

NOTHING is worthy of a Christian
but what is eternal : he should nev
thing but what he may love for ev
fore let us endeavour, in the first pl
the will of God to all other satisf
to seek in all things to please Hi
receive, as coming from His hands,
submission, whatever He is pleased
4thly, to recollect ourselves frequ
presence, and depend upon Him in :

ion, paying but little attention to what requires of us.

PRAYER.

God and my all ! O amiable and most good ! how little attention do I pay to Thee, how unfaithful am I to Thy grace, and the courage do I evince for the sacrifice of affection to Thee ! And yet Thou art the love of my heart, and, as I hope, my portion for ever. To become worthy of this happiness, I will keep my mind constantly fixed on Thee, and sacrifice to Thy love every thing which may separate me from Thee, and neither to say nor to do anything but in order to gain heaven.

O Lord, that I may avoid whatever is contrary to Thee, and love and practise that only which is well pleasing in Thy sight ; and that, continually recollecting myself in Thee, I may devote my whole self to Thy presence, and do Thy will in all things. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXII.

SELF-ABNEGATION, AND THE RENUNCIATION OF
ALL CUPIDITY.

thou canst not possess perfect liberty unless thou wholly deny thyself.

All self-seekers and self-lovers are bound in fetters; full of desires, full of cares, ever unsettled, and seeking always their own ease, not the things of Jesus Christ; but oftentimes devising and fitting that which shall not stand.

For all shall perish that cometh not of God.

Hold fast this short and perfect word, "Forsake all, and thou shalt find all; relinquish desire, and thou shalt find rest."

Consider this well, and when thou hast put it in practice, thou shalt understand all things.

2. Lord, this is not the work of one day, nor children's sport; yea, in this short sentence is included all the perfection of Religious.

Son, thou oughtest not to be turned back, nor presently cast down, when thou hearest what is the way of the perfect; but be drawn the more onwards towards its lofty heights, or at least aspire ardently for their attainment.

I would it were so with thee, and that

thou wert come so far that thou wert no longer a lover of thyself, but didst simply wait My bidding and his whom I have appointed father over thee; then wouldst thou exceedingly please Me, and all thy life would pass in joy and peace.

Thou hast yet many things to forsake, which unless thou give them up to Me without reserve, thou shalt not obtain that for which thou prayest.

I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest become rich, that is, heavenly wisdom, which treadeth under foot all things below.

Lay aside earthly wisdom, that is, all human and self-complacency.

3. I have said, buy for thyself things most contemptible for such as are precious and most valued in human estimation.

For very mean and contemptible, and most forgotten amongst men, seems that wisdom which is true and heavenly, not reaching high notions of self, nor seeking to be magnified upon earth; which many use in words, while in their life they

WHAT IS IT to quit all things ;
renounce and to die to ourselves ; 1
tify the senses, the mind, and the
to detach ourselves from every thing
us pleasure, and to receive with wi
submission whatever gives us pai
love our friends in God, our enemies
to hate only ourselves ; 5thly, to att
only to God, to our duties, and to o
6thly, to direct all the energies o
towards God and against ourselve
desire nothing but to please Him,
nothing but to offend Him ; 8thly, to
happiness and our merit to gain the
countenance, and to become worthy

How easy to say, I desire to qui


PRAYER.

SUFFER not my heart, O Lord, which was created to love and to possess Thee, to be attached to creatures or to itself, preferably to Thee. Thou alone canst satisfy it, and make it happy; to Thee, therefore, should it solely and constantly adhere. O my God, I can indeed sin without Thee; but I cannot rise again without Thee, nor withdraw myself from any thing that would seduce my mind and corrupt my unsteady heart. Succour, support, and strengthen me in the combats which I am obliged to sustain with myself, in my endeavours to renounce all, that in all I may seek and find Thee. How it distresses me to behold myself the slave of my passions, and the victim of my wayward humours! Break asunder my chains, O Lord, and grant that, detaching myself from all things else, I may adhere only to Thee. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OF THE INCONSTANCY OF OUR HEART, AND OF
DIRECTING OUR FINAL INTENTION TO GOD.

SON, trust not to *thy* feeling; whatever it *may be now, it will quickly be changed into another.*



devout, at another indevout,
fervent, at other times sluggish
heavy, another elated.

But he that is wise and well
in spirit stands above all these
not minding what he feels in him
on what side the wind of instab
eth; but that the whole bent
may be made conducive toward
and wished-for end.

For thus one and the same
ken can he stand, directing, to
this variety of events, the sing
his intention unflinchingly toward

way; and seldom will you find any one altogether free from all blemish of self-seeking.

So of old the Jews came into Bethania, to Martha and Mary, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also.

The eye of the intention must therefore be purified, that it may be single and right; and it must be directed unto Me, beyond all various objects that come between.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

IN order to fix the instability of our hearts in what regards the service of God, and the care of our salvation, we should, 1st, mistrust ourselves and confide in God; 2dly, we should have recourse to Him and implore His assistance on all occasions; 3dly, we should often renew our intention of pleasing Him, without wishing to please ourselves; 4thly, we should fight without ceasing against our natural repugnances; 5thly, we should desire only what God wills, and endeavour to execute it; 6thly, we should habituate our hearts to love God, and, as it were, contract those holy bonds by which he desires to be united with us for ever; and, 7thly, we should

punctually attend to the inspirations and suggestions of His grace.

PRAYER.

WHEN shall Thy grace, O God, inspire me with some degree of that firmness and faithful adherence to Thee which Thy glory imparts to the blessed! Suffer not my heart to be overcome by that inconstancy which is so natural to it, nor my life to be a perpetual succession of good desires and evil practices, of promises and infidelities. Not to love Thee at all times, is to love Thee not as God; Thy reign over our hearts, to be worthy of Thee, should be constant and inviolable.

Grant, then, O God, that my soul may be all Thine, at all times, and for ever; and that, by my perpetual fidelity, I may merit eternal happiness. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THAT HE THAT LOVETH GOD RELISHETH HIM ABOVE
ALL THINGS AND IN ALL THINGS.

BEHOLD my God and my all! What would I more, and what greater happiness can I desire?

O sweet and savoury word! but to him that loveth the Word, not the world or the things that are in the world.

My God and my all! To one that understandeth sufficient is said; to one that loveth, to repeat it often is delightful.

For when Thou art present, all things yield delight; but when Thou art absent, all things grow loathsome.

Thou makest a tranquil heart, great peace, and festive joy.

Thou makest us to think well of all things, and in all things to praise Thee; nor can any thing without Thee afford any lasting pleasure; but if it is to be agreeable and well-pleasing to us, Thy presence must be present, and it must be seasoned with the savour of Thy wisdom.

2. To whom Thou impartest a relish, what will not be rightly agreeable to him?

And to him that relisheth Thee not, what can ever yield any true delight?

But the wise of the world and the ~~ise~~ according to the flesh are destitute Thy wisdom; for in the former is



with Thy presence, and become to me all in all !

So long as this is not granted, my joy will not be full.

As yet, alas, the old man is living in me; he is not wholly crucified, he is not perfectly dead.

He still lusteth strongly against the spirit, he wageth war with me, neither suffereth he the kingdom of the soul to be quiet.

4. But Thou, who rulest over the power of the sea, and assuageth the motion of its waves, arise and help me.

Scatter Thou the nations that delight in wars, crush them in Thy might.

Shew forth, I beseech Thee, Thy wonderful works, and let Thy right hand be glorified.

For there is no hope nor refuge for me but in Thee, O Lord my God.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

To love God alone, to love Him above all things, is to delight only in Him, to seek only Him, and to renounce every thing which by

found much vanity, and in the latter death.

But they that follow Thee, by the contempt of worldly things and the mortification of the flesh, are found to be wise indeed; for they are translated from vanity to truth, from the flesh to the spirit.

Such as these have a relish of God and whatever good is found in creatures they refer it all to the praise of their Maker.

But great, yea, very great, is the difference between the relish of the Creator and the creature, of eternity and of time, of light uncreated and of light enlightened.

3. O Light perpetual! transcending all created lights, dart forth that light from above, which may penetrate all the secret recesses of my heart.

Cleanse, cheer, enlighten, and enliven my spirit with its powers, that with joyful ecstasy it may cleave to Thee.

Oh, when will this blessed and desirable hour come, that Thou mayest fill me

by presence, and become to me all

long as this is not granted, my joy
t be full.

et, alas, the old man is living in
is not wholly crucified, he is not
y dead.

still lusteth strongly against the
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r forth, I beseech Thee, Thy wonder-
ks, and let Thy right hand be glori-

there is no hope nor refuge for me
Thee, O Lord my God.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

ve God alone, to love Him above all
to delight only in Him, to seek only
to renounce every thing which by

nature is pleasing to us, according to that of the royal Prophet: *My soul refused to be comforted: I remembered God, and was delighted, and was exercised, and my spirit swooned away.* Pa. lxvii.

Wherefore, if we would love only God, let us mortify the senses, captivate the mind, restrain the heart, subdue the flesh, and refuse ourselves numberless gratifications, in order to please God. Happy the soul that is willing to live a crucified life with Jesus upon the Cross, that so it may be able to say with the Apostle, Jesus Christ is my life, and it is my gain to die to all, that I may live for Him alone.

PRAYER.

How sweet, O Lord, to breathe only Thy love, and to say to Thee with my whole heart, "My God and my all! my Lord and my God!" Grant that these words may enter into my soul; do Thou impress them upon my mind and in my heart; grant me to understand and to practise them. O great God, *Thou* art, and this doth satisfy me, because I love Thee more for Thyself than for my own sake. But, O God! Thou art my Saviour: all that Thou art in this respect, Thou art for me, and this redoubles my confidence and love for Thee. O my God! how can I live without Thee! How can I not live for Thee! O my Lord! reign absolutely over me.

O my God! may my whole self be Thine, and may I live only for Thee! My Lord and my God! mayest Thou be so in time, that Thou mayest be my portion for all eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THAT THERE IS NO BEING SECURE FROM TEMPTATION IN THIS LIFE.

SON, thou art never secure in this life; but as long as thou livest spiritual weapons are always necessary for thee.

Thou art in the midst of enemies, and art assaulted on the right hand and on the left.

If, therefore, thou dost not make use of the buckler of patience on every occasion, thou wilt not be long without a wound.

Moreover, if thou dost not set thy heart fixedly on Me, with a sincere will of suffering all things for My sake, thou canst neither sustain the heat of this warfare, *nor attain to the palm of the Blessed.* *It behooveth thee, therefore, to go*

through all manfully, and to use our hand against whatsoever withstand thee.

For to him that overcometh is given manna, and to the sluggard is left misery.

2. If in this life thou seekest rest, then wilt thou come to the eternal rest. Set not thyself for much rest, but great patience.

Seek true peace not upon earth, but heaven; not in men nor in other creatures but in God alone.

Thou must be willing, for the love of God, to suffer all things, namely, labours and sorrows, temptations, vexations, afflictions, necessities, infirmities, injuries, persecutions, reprehensions, humiliations, confusions, corrections, and contempts.

These help to virtue, these prove the novice of Christ, these things wear the celestial crown.

I will give thee back for this labour a reward eternal, and for transient confusion glory that is infinite.

3. Dost thou think always to have spiritual consolations when thou pleasest? My Saints had not so; but they met with many troubles, and various temptations, and great desolations.

But they patiently supported themselves in all contingencies, and confided more in God than in themselves; knowing that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to merit the glory that is to come.

Wouldst thou have that immediately, which others, after many tears and great pains, have hardly obtained?

Expect the Lord, do manfully, and be of good heart; do not despond, do not give up, but offer with constancy both soul and body for the glory of God.

He will reward thee most abundantly: I will be with thee in all thy tribulations.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

PREPARE thy soul for temptation, says the wise man; that is, 1st, let not thy happiness consist in being free from sufferings, but in bearing them patiently; 2dly, expose not thyself voluntarily to

with a reverential fear in His pre-
diffidence in thyself, and a firm confidence
who will support thee against all thy
thy spiritual enemies.

A truly Christian soul should de-
vour, in the wounds of Jesus, and
with patience, fortitude, and fidelity.
He is pleased to appoint. For to be
Christians, and to fulfil the duties of
must be ever resolved to suffer for
God; since, as St. Cyprian remarks,
we are the heirs of a crucified Jesus.

PRAYER.

THOU knowest, O God, that nothing
contrary to our natural inclinations as

CHAPTER XXXVI.

AGAINST THE VAIN JUDGMENTS OF MAN.

Now, cast thy heart firmly on the Lord, and fear not human judgment, whensoever thy conscience gives testimony of thy piety and innocence.

It is a good and blessed thing to suffer in such manner; neither will this be grievous to an humble heart, nor to one that confideth in God more than in oneself.

Many say many things, and therefore the credit must be given to them.

Neither is it possible to satisfy all.

Though Paul endeavoured to please all the Lord, and became all to all, yet he made little account of being judged by man's day.

2. He laboured abundantly for the education and salvation of others, as much as lay in him and as much as he could; *but he could not prevent* being sometimes *reproached and despised* by others.

Therefore he committed a who knoweth all, and defended patience and humility against of those that spoke unjustly, those who devised vain and ly and who, according to capriciousness of whatever they wish.

However, he answered them lest his silence might give scandal to the weak.

3. Who art thou, that thou afraid of a mortal man? To and to-morrow he is no more.

Fear God, and thou shalt not of the terrors of man.

What can any one do against words or injuries?

He rather hurts himself than will he be able, whoever he be the judgment of God.

Have God before thine eyes not contend with querulous words.

So that if at present thou overcome, and to suffer a conflict thou hast not deserved, do

this, and do not lessen thy crown by impatience, but rather look up to Me in heaven, who am powerful to deliver thee from all confusion and injury, and to render to every one according to his works.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

A CHRISTIAN, when assailed by the shafts of calumny, should, in reality, regard these trials in a favourable point of view, because they subject him to the happy necessity of flying to God, and of appealing to Him as the secret witness of his conscience. Although we are fully convinced that, in reality, the esteem or contempt of men, their good or bad opinion respecting us, can neither make us more happy nor more miserable, yet do we strive to obtain their approbation. Why do we not rather endeavour to establish ourselves in the favour of God, who will decide our eternal doom ?

PRAYER.

O LORD, who didst sacrifice Thy life by a cruel and disgraceful death, and didst give Thy heart to perpetual sorrow and bitterness for my sake, can I refuse to sacrifice to Thee the sensibilities of my heart, when troubled on account of the *remarks and disadvantageous judgments of others concerning me* ? Grant, O divine Jesus !

that at the sight of the outrages thou didst endure for me, my heart may reproach itself for suffering so little, and that so unwillingly, for Thee. And, since the wounds which are inflicted upon the reputation of our neighbour fall always, either in this life or in the next, upon him who does the injury, for Thy glory, and not for mine, deliver my enemies from their blindness, forgive their malice, and inflame them with the fire of Thy charity. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

OF A PURE AND ENTIRE RESIGNATION OF OURSELVES
FOR THE OBTAINING FREEDOM OF HEART.

SON, relinquish thyself, and thou shalt find Me.

Stand without choice or any self-seeking, and thou shalt always gain.

For greater grace shall be added to thee as soon as thou hast given up thyself, and dost not take thyself back.

2. Lord, how often shall I resign myself, and in what things shall I relinquish myself?

3. Always and at all times ; as in little, so also in great : I make no exception, but will have thee to be found in all things divested of self.

Otherwise, how canst thou be Mine and I thine, unless thou be both interiorly and exteriorly stripped of thy own will ?

The sooner thou effectest this, the better will it be with thee ; and the more fully and sincerely thou dost it, the more wilt thou please Me, and the more shalt thou gain.

4. Some there are that resign themselves, but it is with some exception ; for they do not wholly trust in God, and therefore are busy in providing for themselves.

Some also at first offer all ; but afterwards, being assailed by temptation, they return again to what they had left, and therefore make no progress in virtue.

These shall neither attain to the true liberty of a pure heart, nor to the grace of a *delightful familiarity* with Me, unless they *first entirely* resign themselves up,

and offer themselves a daily sacrifice to Me; without which, union of freewill neither is nor shall subsist.

5. I have often said to thee, and I repeat it now again, forsake thyself, resign thyself, and thou shalt enjoy a great inward peace.

Give all for all; seek nothing; call for nothing back; stand purely and with a full confidence before Me, and thou shalt possess Me.

Thou shalt be free in heart, and the darkness shall not weigh thee down.

Aim at this, pray for this, desire this, that thou mayest be divested of all self-seeking; and thus naked, follow Jesus naked, that thou mayest die to thyself, and eternally live to Me.

Then all vain imaginations shall vanish, all evil disturbances and superfluous cares.

Then also immoderate fear shall forsake thee, and inordinate love shall die.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

WHAT is it to quit, to renounce, to abandon ourselves entirely to God, without any reserve?

It is, 1st, to act only from the influence of His grace, and an actual desire to please Him, a desire which should be kept up and oftentimes renewed; 2dly, it is to yield to Him on all occasions, and to prefer His pleasure to our own; 3dly, it is to renounce our own will in all things, and to follow only the will of God; 4thly, it is to make our pleasure consist in pleasing Him, and to have no other interest than His glory; 5thly, to be docile to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, and the impressions of His love. But, alas! who is there that lives after this manner? Who is there that thus renounces himself and abandons himself unreservedly to God? We renounce ourselves on some occasions, and on others we adhere to self-love; we quit ourselves for a time, and then again we seek ourselves. The Spirit of the Lord, says the royal Prophet, only passes by certain souls, but does not stay; and when He returns He knoweth His place no more; He finds them given more to themselves than to their God.

PRAYER.

How am I wearied, O Lord, with being so much given to myself, and so little devoted to Thee; with seeking myself so often, and Thee so seldom! Alas! *it is because I am vehemently alive to self, and but very little sensible of Thee.* O my God! take Thou place of self within me,

So must thou, in like manner, fly to the closet of thy heart, and there most earnestly implore the Divine assistance.

For therefore, as thou redest, were Josue and the children of Israel deceived by the Gabaonites, because they did not first consult the Lord; but too easily giving credit to pleasant words, were deluded with counterfeit piety.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

EXTERIOR occupations oftentimes withdraw the soul from within, and hinder it from being recollected, and from keeping itself in the presence of God, particularly when we give ourselves wholly to them, and reserve not for God the freedom of our hearts. But when we only lend ourselves to exterior employments, and give ourselves, while performing them, to the accomplishment of the will of God, who requires them of us, then we do not become dissipated, but in the diversity of our employments we do the *one thing*, which is to seek to please God. The desire to please God should include every other desire, and constitute our peace and happiness. No exterior actions can distract that soul which reduces all to unity, that is, which seeks only to please God and finds it all in Him.

PRAYER.

AM well aware, my God, that the peace of soul in this life is not what it will be in the ; for in eternity we shall enjoy the certainty leasing Thee, and of possessing Thy love ; in time, we can be certain of neither. Ah ! hard and painful is this uncertainty to a soul loves Thee, O God, and loves but Thee ! If Thou wilt not assure me that I love , grant at least that I may live as though I sure I did love Thee, that thus Thou est have all the satisfaction of my love, and the merit of it. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WHAT A MAN MUST NOT BE TOO ANXIOUS ABOUT
HIS AFFAIRS.

commit thy cause to Me always ; I dispose of it well in its due season. wait my appointment, and thence shalt experience success therefrom.

Lord, most willingly do I commit *things to Thee* ; for but little can my *device avail*.

PRAYER.

I AM well aware, my God, that the peace of the soul in this life is not what it will be in the next; for in eternity we shall enjoy the certainty of pleasing Thee, and of possessing Thy love; but in time, we can be certain of neither. Ah! how hard and painful is this uncertainty to a soul that loves Thee, O God, and loves but Thee alone! If Thou wilt not assure me that I love Thee, grant at least that I may live as though I were sure I did love Thee, that thus Thou mayest have all the satisfaction of my love, and I all the merit of it. Amen.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THAT A MAN MUST NOT BE TOO ANXIOUS ABOUT
HIS AFFAIRS.

Give to Me always

In its due season

Would that I might not be too much set upon future events, but unhesitatingly offer myself to Thy good pleasure.

3. My son, oftentimes a man vehemently pursues something which he desires; but when he has obtained it, he begins to be of another mind.

For our affections are not enduring with regard to the same object, but we rather drive onwards from one to another.

It is therefore no small matter, even in things the most trifling, to relinquish self.

4. Man's true progress consists in denying himself, and the man of self-denial is very much at liberty, and secure likewise.

But the old enemy, opposed to all that is good, ceaseth not from tempting, but day and night plotteth deep snares, if perchance he may precipitate the unwary into the deceitful snare.

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation, saith the Lord.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

It is vain to trouble ourselves about the future, and to be discouraged at the sight of our

firmities; all consists in relying entirely upon
 id; in leaving ourselves in His hands, and in
 aring no pains to please Him.

It often happens that God wills or permits our
 iety concerning salvation, to bring us into a
 te bordering on despair, in order to oblige us
 place our whole confidence in Him. For the
 e we are supported by creatures, the more we
 e upheld by God, whose will and pleasure it is
 assist us when all others abandon us. Let us
 refore endeavour to cast all our care upon
 us, who will be mindful of us, and let us
 fully correspond with His holy designs.

PRAYER.

O MY God! who art able and willing to assist
 , what grounds have I not to place my whole
 ufidence in Thee, to throw myself into the
 ns of Thy providence, and wait the effects of
 y bounty! Thou hast care of all; I will
 refore give myself up entirely to Thee, live
 rays in Thy presence, and ever guide myself
 Thy fear and love. It is this grace I now
 of Thee, the God of my heart, and my por-
 n for ever. Grant me to weigh well, and to
 low Thy admonition: "*Be not solicitous; for*
our heavenly Father knoweth that you have need
all these things." Amen.

CHAPTER XL.

THAT MAN HATH NO GOOD OF HIMSELF, AND THAT
HE CANNOT GLORY IN ANY THING.

LORD, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?

What hath man deserved, that Thou shouldst give him Thy grace?

Lord, what cause have I to complain, if Thou forsake me? or what can I justly allege, if what I petition Thou shalt not grant?

This most assuredly I may truly think and say: "Lord, I am nothing, I can do nothing, I have nothing of myself that is good; but I am in all things defective, and ever tend to nothing."

And unless I am assisted and interiorly instructed by Thee, I become wholly tepid and relaxed.

2. But Thou, O Lord, art always the same, and endurest unto eternity; ever good, just, and holy; doing all things

well, justly, and holily, and disposing them in wisdom.

But I, who am more inclined to go back than to go forward, continue not always in one state; for seven different times are changed over me.

Yet it quickly becometh better when it pleaseth Thee, and Thou stretchest out Thy helping hand; for Thou alone without man's aid canst assist and so strengthen me, that my countenance shall be no more diversely changed; but my heart be converted, and find its rest in Thee alone.

3. Wherefore, did I but know well how to cast from me all human comfort, either for the sake of devotion, or through the necessity by which I am compelled to seek Thee, because there is no man that can comfort me, then might I deservedly repose in Thy favour, and rejoice in the gift of new consolation.

4. Thanks be to Thee, from whom all proceedeth, *as often as it happeneth well to me.*
I, indeed, am but vanity, and nothing

in Thy sight, an inconstant and v
man.

Whence, therefore, can I glory, or
what do I desire to be thought hi
of?

Forsooth, of my very nothingness;
this is most vain.

Truly vain-glory is an evil plague
greatest vanity; because it draweth
from true glory, and robbeth us of
only grace.

For whilst a man taketh complac
in himself, he displeaseth Thee; while
panteth after human applause, he is
prived of true virtues.

5. But true glory and holy exult
is to glory in Thee, and not in onesel
rejoice in Thy name, not in one's
strength; to find pleasure in no crea
save only for Thy sake.

Let Thy Name be praised, not
let Thy work be magnified, not mine
Thy holy Name be blessed, but let
ing be attributed to me of the prais
men.

Thou art my glory, Thou art the exultation of my heart.

In Thee will I glory and rejoice all the day; but for myself, I will glory in nothing but in my infirmities.

6. Let the Jews seek glory of another; will seek that which is from God alone.

All human glory, all temporal honour, all worldly grandeur, compared to Thy eternal glory, is but vanity and folly.

O my truth and my mercy! My God! blessed Trinity! to Thee alone be all praise, honour, power, and glory, for endless ages of ages.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

I AM sensible of my natural corruption, which renders me incapable of all supernatural good, and prone to all evil: but I cast myself on the mercies of a God who can bring much out of nothing, as He produced all things out of nothing; because it is not sufficient for me to know my own nothingness, and that I ought to glory in nothing, but only in my infirmities; I should also (for this is most important) be guided by an humble confidence in myself, and a firm confidence in Him to whom nothing is impossible. When I

Job thus express himself: *mine and I shall be no more.* For what dost Thou, my God! I feel within me a desire of pleasing Thee; and every day appears from before me, when Thou art Thyself to my soul.

PRAYER.

Do Thou, O God, reign absolute over my soul, and may all that it contains be immolated to Thee! Grant that, by Thy holy grace, I may be enabled to suffer the loss of all human and national attachments, to seek in Thee alone my comfort, and to sacrifice my whole self to Thee.

O great God! who knowest my necessities, be merciful and willing to assist me!

CHAPTER XLI.

OF THE CONTEMPT OF ALL TEMPORAL HONOUR.

My son, take it not to heart, if thou seest others honoured and advanced, and thyself despised and debased.

Lift up thy heart to Me in heaven, and the contempt of men on earth shall not grieve thee.

2. Lord, we are in blindness, and by vanity are quickly seduced.

If I look well into myself, never was any injury done me by any creature, and therefore I can have no just complaint against Thee.

But since I have often and grievously sinned against Thee, every creature is deservedly armed against me.

To me, therefore, is justly due confusion and contempt; but to Thee, praise, honour, and glory.

And unless I put myself in this disposition, *to be willing to be despised and forsaken by all creatures, and to be es-*

ever he be, that appeareth to thee good and much to be loved in this life.

Without Me friendship can neither profit nor endure; nor is that love true and pure which I do not bind together.

Thou oughtest to be so dead towards persons beloved, as to wish, as far as thou art concerned, to be altogether without any human fellowship.

So much the nearer doth man approach to God, as he withdraweth himself the farther from all earthly consolation.

So much the higher also doth he ascend to God, as he descendeth the lower into himself, and becometh the viler in his own estimation.

2. But he that attributeth any thing of good to himself hinders God's grace from coming into him; for the grace of the Holy Spirit ever seeketh a humble heart.

If thou knewest perfectly how to annihilate thyself, and empty thyself of all created love, then would I flow into thee with great grace.

When thou lookest towards creatures,

t of the Creator is withdrawn from

1, for the sake of the Creator, to
ne thyself in all things ; and then
ou be able to attain divine knowl-

little soever it be, if any thing be
stely loved and regarded, it keep-
e back from the Sovereign Good,
rupteth the soul.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

more we descend into the abyss of our
singness, the more do we become exalted
lod. We should therefore, in the first
little and humble, dependent upon the
y, and abide only in Him ; 2dly, the
experience our own weakness and
he more earnestly should we apply to
y of God ; 3dly, the less we find of
ourselves, the more should we debase
s before Him, hoping all things from His
4thly, we should never suffer our hearts
ne attached to any thing but God, our
nd salvation, love only that which we
re for ever, and thus commence in time,
may hope to continue throughout eter-
friendship which is not in God and for

THE CENTRE OF OUR HEARTS, AND WE
satisfy our desires.

PRAYER.

GRANT, O God, that my heart, wh
for Thee alone, may be ever wholly
free from all undue affection to crea
refer all to Thee, and seek Thee
things. Yes, my God, I know, wit
tin, that Thou art the centre of ou
cause Thou art their last end and so
and that they cannot rest until they
Grant me therefore what I now as
sovereign, and constant adherence to

Attend to My words, which inflame hearts and enlighten minds, which excite to compunction and afford manifold consolations.

Never read any thing in order that thou mayest appear more learned or more wise.

Study the mortification of thy vices; for this will more avail thee than the knowledge of many difficult questions.

2. When thou shalt have read and shalt know many things, thou must always revert to the one beginning.

I am He who teacheth men knowledge, and who giveth a more clear understanding to little ones than can be taught by man.

He to whom I speak will quickly be wise, and will profit greatly in spirit.

Wo to them that inquire after many curious things of men, and are little curious of the way to serve Me.

The time will come, when Christ, the *Master of masters*, the Lord of Angels, *hall appear to hear the lessons of all*

men, that is, to examine the conscience of every one.

And then will He search Jerusalem with lamps, and the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light, and the argument of tongues shall be silent.

3. I am He that in an instant elevateth the humble mind to comprehend more reasons of the eternal truth than if any one had studied ten years in the schools.

I teach without noise of words, without confusion of opinions, without ambition of honour, without strife of arguments.

I am He who teacheth to despise earthly things, to loathe things present, to seek the things eternal, to relish the things eternal, to fly honours, to endure scandals, to repose all hope in Me, to desire nothing out of Me, and above all things ardently to love Me.

4. For a certain person, by loving Me intimately, learned things divine and spoke wonders.

He profited more by forsaking all things than by studying subtleties.

But to some I speak things common, to others things more particular; to some I sweetly appear in signs and figures, to others in great light I reveal mysteries.

One is the voice of books, but it teacheth not all men alike, because I within am the Teacher of truth, the Searcher of the heart, the Understander of thoughts, the Mover of actions, distributing to every one as I judge fitting.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

God scarcely communicates Himself at all to proud and presumptuous souls who entertain a vain complacency in themselves; because they rob Him of that glory which belongs to Himself alone. But to the humble, he communicates His most enlivening and efficacious graces, because they confide not in themselves, but from a sense of their own misery and sinfulness, depend solely upon Him who alone can make them worthy of His love.

What will it avail a Christian to know the duties of religion, unless he practise them? What will it avail Him to dispute upon the efficacy and the *operations* of grace, if he be not *fithful in corresponding* with it, and in *punctually following the inspirations* of the Holy

Spirit. *Not every one, says Jesus Christ, that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. We hear this declaration, and why does it not influence our conduct?*

PRAYER.

COME, O Holy Spirit! enlighten the minds of all with Thy sacred light, and inflame their hearts with the fire of Thy love. Teach us what we are to believe, and engage us to practise it. For, alas! what will it avail us to know what is required of us, in order to be saved, if we do not endeavour to reduce it to practice!

Suffer not our faith to condemn us at the last day, by bearing witness to what we ought to have done to gain heaven, and to our having neglected to perform it; but grant that both our minds and our hearts by belief and practice may equally conspire to prepare us for eternal bliss. Amen.

CHAPTER XLIV.

OF NOT DRAWING TO OURSELVES EXTERIOR THINGS.

SON, in many things it behooveth thee to be ignorant, and to esteem thyself as dead.



earth, and as one to whom the whole is crucified.

Many things also must thou pass by with a deaf ear, and think rather of the things that are for thy peace.

It is more profitable to turn away thy face from such things as displease thee, than to give loose to contentious persons, and save to every one his own way of living, than to give loose to contentious persons.

If thou standest well with God, and resist His judgment, thou wilt more easily bear to be overcome.

O Lord; to what are we come? because temporal loss is bewailed: for a gain men labour and run; but all detriment is soon forgotten, and never returns to mind.


That which is of little or no profit is set up in our thoughts, and that which is necessary above all is negligently passed over for the whole man sinketh downward toward things, and unless he quickly reth himself, he willingly continueth in exterior things.

whom the whole

lest thou pass by
think rather of the
peace.

to turn away thy
as displease thee,
his own way of
lose to contentious

with God, and re-
thou wilt more-
me.



2dly, to regard all things as passing
to say to oneself: I am here to-day
be gone to-morrow: at the hour of
will honour, fortune, or pleasure
Only in proportion as I have used
though I used them not.

Happy the Christian who dies
world in affection, before he quits
who endeavours meritoriously to
some one of those things which
forced to relinquish in death! Th
daily, he will best secure for him
departure hence.

We bewail our temporal losses, w
dwell upon them, we are scarcely t
when they happen to us: but w

loss when we withdraw ourselves from

Grant that we may ever prefer Thee
all things else, and choose rather to lose
worldly goods than relinquish but for one
Thy grace and love. When, O God, shall
able the dead within their graves? (that
according to St. Paul, is the spirit, the
er, and the duty of all true Christians.)
shall I think no more of the world, and
ent for the world to think no more of me?
henceforth, O Jesus, I desire to die to all
else, that I may live only to Thee for time
rernity. Amen.

CHAPTER XLV.

WE MAY NOT BELIEVE ALL, AND HOW EASILY
WE ERR IN SPEECH.

Give me help, O Lord, in my tribula-
tion; for vain is the aid of man.

How often have I not found faithful-
ness here where I thought I might de-
pend upon it.

*How often have I there found it
the less expected it!*

Vain therefore is hope in man ; but the salvation of the just is in Thee, O God.

Blessed be Thou, O Lord my God, in all things that befall us.

We are weak and unsteadfast ; we are easily deceived and changed.

2. Who is the man that is able to keep himself so warily and so circumspectly in all things, as not sometimes to fall into delusion or perplexity ?

But he that trusteth in Thee, O Lord, and seeketh Thee with a simple heart, doth not so easily fall.

And should he perchance fall into some tribulation, how entangled soever he be therewith, he will the sooner be rescued or comforted by Thee ; for Thou wilt not finally forsake him that trusteth in Thee.

Rare indeed is a faithful friend who will persevere in all the pressing necessities of his friend.

Thou, O Lord, Thou alone art most faithful in all things, and besides Thee, there is no other such.

3. Oh, how wise was that holy soul

d, My mind is solidly established in
d grounded upon Christ!*

Were it but so with me, human fear
ould not so easily give me anxiety, nor
arrows of men's words move me.

Who is sufficient to foresee all things?
o to provide against future evils?

If things foreseen do yet often hurt us,
w can things unlooked for otherwise
n grievously wound us? But have I
t better provided for my wretched
f?

Why also have I so easily placed con-
snce in others?

But we are men; and no other indeed
n frail men, although by many we are
eemed and called Angels.

To whom shall I give credit, O Lord?

Whom shall I believe but Thee? Thou
the Truth, which canst neither deceive
r be deceived.

And again; every man is a liar, weak,
stable, and subject to fail, especially in
rds; so that we ought not readily to

* *Life of St. Agatha.*

believe even that, which in appearance seemeth to sound well.

4. How wisely didst Thou forewarn us to take heed of men, and that a man's enemies are those of his own household; that we are not to believe if any one should say, Behold here, or behold there.

I have been taught to my cost, and I wish it may serve to make me more cautious, and not increase my folly.

Be wary, saith a certain one; be wary, keep to thyself what I tell thee.

And whilst I keep silence, and believe the matter to be secret, he himself cannot keep the secret which he desireth me to keep, but presently betrayeth both me and himself, and goeth his way.

From such foolish speech and such unwary people defend me, O Lord, that I may not fall into their hands, nor ever commit the like.

Give to my mouth truth and constancy in my words, and remove far from me a crafty tongue.

What I am not willing to suffer I ought by all means to shun.

5. Oh, how good and how peaceful is it to be silent about others, and not to believe all that is said, nor easily to report what one has heard :

To lay oneself open to few ; always to seek Thee, the Beholder of the heart :

And not to be carried about with every wind of words ; but to wish that all things, both within and without us, may be accomplished according to the pleasure of thy will !

How secure is it for the preservation of heavenly grace, to fly the human appearance, not to seek those things that seem to cause admiration abroad ; but with all diligence to follow those things which bring amendment of life and fervour !

To how many hath it been hurtful to have their virtue known, and over-hastily praised !

How indeed hath grace profited when kept with silence during this frail life ! the

upon Christ? St. Agatha. It is, only upon Him, and trust but little
ises of men; 2dly, it is to prefer H
love before the friendship and cons
all mankind besides; for there is
but in being well with God; 3dly, i
with Him with all the earnestness
confidently to have recourse to Him
necessities, and to oblige our hearts
that at the moment of death, when
pear before Him, He may show H
as a Father of mercy, and as a Savi
have long known and loved, and not
God, and terribly just Judge, sayin
would not endeavour to know Me
in time: now will I not know you

ere I to act thus, how justly should I deserve
 be miserable both for time and eternity!
 at, Lord! I suffice for Thee, and shouldst
 Thou suffice for me! No, blessed Jesus, it
 ll not be thus; I desire only Thee and the
 omplishment of Thy holy will, as my happi-
 s for time and eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER XLVI.

HAVING CONFIDENCE IN GOD, WHEN ARROWS
 OF WORDS ARE AIMED AGAINST US.

s, stand firm, and trust in Me; for
 at are words but words?

They fly through the air, but hurt not
 tone.

f thou art guilty, think that thou wilt
 lingly amend thyself; if thou art not
 scious to thyself of any thing, think
 t thou wilt willingly suffer this for
 d's sake.

t is a small matter that thou shouldst
 etimes bear with words, who art not
 as yet to endure hard blows.

nd why do such trifles go to thy heart,

but because thou art yet a
gardest men more than thou

For because thou art al
despised, thou art not willin
hended for thy faults, and s
in excuses.

2. But look better into
thou shalt find that the
within thee, and a vain fon
sing men.

For since thou refusest
and confounded for thy def
indeed that thou art neither
nor dead to the world, 1
crucified to thee.

But give ear to My w
shalt not value ten thous
men.

Behold, if all were said
which with the utmost ma
sibly be invented, what ha
do thee, if thou wouldst let
and value them no more th

Could they even so muc
hair from thee?

3. But he who keepeth not his heart interiorly, nor God before his eyes, is easily moved with a word of dispraise.

Whereas he that trusteth in Me, and leaureth not to stand by his own judgment, will be void of human fear.

For I am the Judge and Discerner of all secrets; I know how the matter passeth; I know both him that inflicteth the injury and him that suffereth it.

From Me went forth this word, by My permission it happened, that the thoughts out of many hearts might be revealed.

I will judge the guilty and the innocent: but by a secret judgment I would try them both beforehand.

4. The testimony of men oftentimes receiveth: My judgment is true; it shall stand and not be overthrown.

It is for the most part hidden, and to be laid open in every thing; yet it never erreth, nor can it err: though to the eyes of the unwise it may seem not right.

To Me, therefore, must thou run in

every decision, and not depend upon own judgment.

For the just man will not be troubled whatever happeneth to him from God.

And should even some unjust charge preferred against him, he will not care; yet neither will he vainly rejoice if he be reasonably acquitted by others.

For he considereth that I am He searcheth the heart and the reins; judgeth not according to the face, nor according to human appearance.

For oftentimes that is found blame-worthy in My eyes which in the judgment of men is esteemed commendable.

5. O Lord God, the just Judge, strict and patient, who knowest the frailty and depravity of men, be, Thou my strength and my entire confidence, for my conscience sufficeth me not.

Thou knowest that which I know and therefore under every reprehension ought to humble myself, and bear it with meekness.

Pardon me, therefore, propitiously

as I have not done thus; and give in future the grace of greater longing.


or better to me is Thy abundant mercy, for the obtaining of pardon, than my own imaginary justice for the defence of my hidden conscience.

And although I am not conscious to myself of any thing, yet I cannot hereby justify myself: for Thy mercy apart, no living shall in Thy sight be justified.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

It is difficult not to be troubled when we are rebuked, reprimanded, or contemned. But true Christian humility consists in not entertaining or expressing the resentment we at first experience; that is, it consists, first, in not indulging in hurtful and contemptuous reflections upon

those who despise us; 2dly, in stifling the mortification they occasion us, and in offering it as a sacrifice to God; 3dly, in behaving kindly towards them, speaking to them and rendering services as occasion may occur, and in doing them as much good as we think they have done us harm. But, alas, how few practise this humility, and make good use of contradic-



How little, O God, is a true Chris-
tian one who fears and loves Thee above
how little is he affected by the judgment
and how much concerned as to the
Thou wilt one day pass upon him !
present before Thee, in the most holy
will ask, how do I stand with Thee ?
I in Thy sight ! What will be my
With such thoughts let me die to
the esteem and to the fear of the
men, that I may seek only to find
Thee. Amen.

CHAPTER XLVII

sufficient to recompense thee be-
 ll bounds and measure.

not long thou hast to labour here,
 it thou be always oppressed with
 1.

t a little, and thou shalt see a
 end of suffering.

hour cometh when all labour and
 shall be no more.

is little and short which passeth
 with time.

find what thou art about: labour
 ly in My vineyard: I will be thy

ze, read, sing, lament, keep silence,
 bear adversities manfully: eternal
 worth all these, and greater combats.
 e shall come on one day, which is
 to the Lord.

it will not be day or night, such
 at present; but light everlasting,
 brightness, steadfast peace, and
 rose.


*shalt not then say, Who shall de-
 from the body of this death?*

Neither shalt thou cry out, *Wo is me* that my sojourning is prolonged; for death shall be no more, but never-failing health; no anxiety, but blessed delight, and a society sweet and glorious.

3. Oh! if thou couldst see the everlasting crowns of the Saints in heaven, and in how great glory they now triumph, who appeared contemptible heretofore to this world, and as it were even unworthy of life, doubtless thou wouldst immediately cast thyself down to the very earth, and wouldst rather be ambitious to be in subjection to all, than to have precedence over so much as one.

Neither wouldst thou covet the pleasant days of this life, but wouldst rather be glad to suffer tribulation for God's sake; and esteem it the greatest gain to be reputed as nothing amongst men.

4. Oh, if thou didst but relish these things, did they penetrate deep into thy heart, how wouldst thou dare so much as once to complain!



Ought not all painful labours to be endured for everlasting life ?

It is no small matter to lose or gain the kingdom of God.

Lift up, therefore, thy face to Heaven ; behold I, and all My Saints with Me, who in this world have had a great conflict, now rejoice, are comforted now, are now secure, are now at rest ; and they shall for all eternity abide with Me in the kingdom of My Father.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

How hard is this saying, that salvation is only to be obtained by a life of continual sufferings, by constantly fighting against and by ever renouncing and dying to ourselves ! But how are we encouraged to submit to such a course, by the hope and assurance of eternal happiness, which will be the reward we shall receive in exchange for the disappointments and miseries of this present time ! Nothing will afford us such great consolation at the hour of death, as the good use we have made of sufferings : then shall we find that we have done nothing purely *for God, but what we have done contrary to ourselves, and that a truly Christian life must necessarily be a life of crosses and self-denials.*



permanent felicity of the next. A death, what shall we not wish to have suffered, and renounced for obtaining heaven! Instil, O Lord, into something of the desires we shall find to no purpose, that we may now rest and die to ourselves. Grant we may consider any thing as great but what is regard all that passes away with time and contemptible. O happiness! O eternal felicity! console us under the our mortal course. And since we necessarily repent either in time or for suffer either in this life or in the next we beseech Thee, O Jesus, patient

.. . . .

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE DAY OF ETERNITY, AND OF THE DISTRESSES
OF THIS LIFE.

most happy mansion of the supernal
!

1, most bright day of eternity ! which
ight ever obscureth, but which the
reign Truth always enlighteneth.

day always joyful, always secure,
never changing its state for the con-
.

1, that this day would shine forth, and
all these temporal things would come
end !

shineth, indeed, upon the Saints, re-
ident with everlasting brightness ; but
1 pilgrims upon earth it is seen only
ar off and through a glass.

The citizens of heaven know how
il that day is ; but we poor exiled
ren of Eve mourn that this our day
ter and tedious.

days of this life are short and evil,

harassed with many snares, distressed with many curiosities, entangled with many vanities, encompassed with many sorrows, worn with many labours, tempted with many temptations, enervated with pleasures, and afflicted with want.

3. Oh, when will there be an end to these evils?

When shall I be set at liberty from this wretched slavery of vice?

When, O Lord, shall I triumph over sin alone?

When shall I fully rejoice in

~~~~~

Thy kingdom? When wilt Thou be all in all to me?

Oh, when shall I be with Thee in Thy kingdom, which Thou hast prepared for Thy beloved from all eternity?

I am left poor and an exile in an enemy's country, where there are daily wars and grievous misfortunes.

4. Solace my banishment, assuage my sorrow, for my every desire aspireth unto Thee; for whatever this world offereth for my comfort is all burdensome to me.


I long to enjoy Thee intimately, but cannot attain unto it.

I desire to cleave to heavenly things, but things temporal and my unmortified passions weigh me down.

With my mind I wish to be above all things, but by the flesh I am forced against my will to be subject to them.

Thus, unhappy man that I am, I fight with myself, and am become burdensome to myself, whilst the spirit tendeth upwards, and the flesh downwards.

5. *Oh! what do I suffer interiorly,*



from me, and depart not in  
Thy servant.

Dart forth Thy lightning, &  
them : shoot Thy arrows, and  
phantoms of the enemy be p

Recollect my senses in  
me forget all worldly things  
speedily to cast away and to  
phantoms and vice.

Come to my aid, O Eterna  
no vanity may move me.

Come, heavenly sweetness,  
impurity fly from before Thy

There am I where my thought is : and there oftentimes are my thoughts where that which I love is.

That thing most readily cometh to my mind which naturally delighteth me, or which through custom is pleasing to me.

6. Whence Thou, the Eternal Truth, hast plainly said : Where thy treasure is, there also is thy heart.

If I love heaven, I love to think on heavenly things.

If I love the world, I rejoice at the world's prosperity, and am troubled at its adversity.

If I love the flesh, my imagination is often on the things of the flesh.

If I love the spirit, I delight to think of spiritual things.

For whatsoever things I love, of the same I love to speak and hear, and I carry home with me the imaginative impressions of such.

But blessed is that man who for Thee,  
O Lord, *abandoneth* all things created;  
*who offereth* violence to nature, and

through fervour of spirit crucifieth the concupiscence of the flesh; that so, with a serene conscience, he may offer to Thee pure prayer, and become worthy to be admitted among the choir of Angels, having excluded himself both exteriorly and interiorly from all the things of earth.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

WHAT will it avail us to suffer and to deplore the miseries of this life, and to sigh after the good things of the next, if we do not endeavour to receive our present tribulations with patience, as coming from the hand of God, and with humility, as corresponding with our deserts; if we strive not to obtain that eternal happiness, after which we sigh, by constant fidelity! O happy day! O eternal joy! O infinite, unchangeable happiness! O establishment! O mansion! O plenitude of God in us and of us in God! O transformation of a blessed soul into its God and its all! When shall I possess thee! But when shall I deserve thee! Weary of myself and of the inefficacy of my desires, I ardently long for thee, O Paradise! and yet how little do I do to obtain thy eternal happiness! Let us join, my soul, let us add to the esteem we have of Paradise our exertions to obtain it. Let us regard it as a crown which can only be obtained by



ing a holy violence to ourselves, and as a recompense to be earned only by a supernatural life.

PRAYER.

WHEN, O God, shall I withdraw my heart from all things visible and terrestrial, and give my whole self to Thee, my sovereign and invisible good? When shalt Thou alone become my consolation and the only happiness of my soul? When shall I see in Thee, my Saviour, what I now believe? When shall I possess what I love? When shall I find what I seek? Comfort me in this my exile, support me in my sufferings, strengthen me in my weakness. Come, O Jesus, come into my soul, by Thy grace, Thy presence, and Thy love. Take possession of my heart, that it may never more be separated from Thee. I languish, I sigh, and burn with the desire of beholding Thee face to face in Thy glory. O when shall faith be lost in vision, and hope swallowed up in fruition?

How burdensome is this life to a soul that loves only Thee, my Saviour! and how cruel a martyrdom to support it! No, Lord, I can no longer live without loving Thee, nor love Thee as I desire, without seeing Thee! Terminate therefore my anguish, by closing my life. Speak, my soul, speak to Thy God; but rather, O God, *do Thou speak to my heart, that it may die to itself, and live only to Thee.* Amen.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

OF THE DESIRE OF ETERNAL LIFE, AND HOW GREAT  
ARE THE BENEFITS PROMISED TO THEM THAT  
FIGHT.

SON, when thou perceivest the desire of eternal bliss to be infused into thee from above, and thou wouldst fain go out of the tabernacle of this body, that thou mightest contemplate My brightness without any shadow of change; enlarge thy heart, and receive this holy inspiration with thy whole desire.

Return the greatest thanks to the Supreme Goodness, which dealeth so condescendingly with thee, mercifully visiteth thee, ardently inciteth thee, and powerfully raiseth thee up, lest by thy own weight thou fall down to the things of earth.

For it is not by thy own thoughtfulness or endeavour that thou receivest this, but by the mere condescension of heavenly grace and divine regard; that so thou

st advance in virtues and greater hu-  
 /, and prepare thyself for future con-  
 and labour with the whole affection  
 y heart to keep close to Me, and  
 Me with a fervent will.

Son, the fire often burneth, but the  
 ascendeth not without smoke.

d so the desires of some are on fire  
 heavenly things, and yet they are not  
 om the temptation of carnal affection.  
 erefore is it not altogether purely  
 d's honour that they act, when they  
 nestly petition Him.

h, also, is oftentimes thy desire,  
 thou hast professed to be so im-  
 nate.

: that is not pure and perfect which  
 yed with self-interest.

Ask not that which is pleasant and  
 nient, but that which is acceptable.  
 e and for My honour; for if thou  
 st rightly, thou oughtest to prefer  
 o follow My appointment rather than  
 own desire or any other desirable

I know thy desire, and I have often heard thy groanings.

Thou wouldst wish to be already in the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

Now doth the eternal dwelling, and the heavenly country full of festivity, delight thee.

But that hour is not yet come; for there is yet another time, a time of war, a time of labour and of probation.

Thou desirest to be filled with the Sovereign Good, but thou canst not at present attain to it.

I am He: wait for Me, saith the Lord, until the kingdom of God come.

4. Thou hast yet to be tried upon earth, and exercised in many things.

Consolation shall sometimes be given thee, but abundant satiety shall not be granted thee.

Take courage, therefore, and be valiant, as well in doing as in suffering things repugnant to nature.

Thou must put on the new man, and be changed into another person.

That which thou wouldst not, thou must oftentimes do ; and that which thou wouldst, thou must leave undone.

What pleaseth others shall prosper, what is pleasing to thee shall not succeed.

What others say shall be hearkened to ; what thou sayest shall be reckoned as nought.

Others shall ask, and shall receive ; thou shalt ask, and not obtain.

5. Others shall be great in the esteem of men ; about thee nothing shall be said.

To others this or that shall be committed ; but thou shalt be accounted as of no use.

At this nature will sometimes repine, and it will be a great matter if thou bear it with silence.

In these, and many such-like things, the faithful servant of the Lord is wont to be tried how far he can deny and break himself in all things.

There is scarce any thing in which thou *standest so much in need of dying to thyself as in seeing and suffering things that*

are contrary to thy will, and more especially when those things are commanded which seem to thee inconvenient and of little use.

And because, being under authority, thou darest not resist the higher power, therefore it seemeth to thee hard to walk at the beck of another, and wholly to give up thy own opinion.

6. But consider, son, the fruit of these labours, their speedy termination, and their reward exceeding great; and thou wilt not hence derive affliction, but the most strengthening consolation in thy suffering.

For in regard to that little of thy will which thou now willingly forsakest, thou shalt for ever have thy will in heaven.

For there thou shalt find all that thou wilt, all that thou canst desire.

There shall be to thee the possession of every good, without fear of losing it.

There thy will, always one with Me, shall not covet any extraneous or private thing.

There no one shall resist thee, no one complain of thee, no one obstruct thee, nothing shall stand in thy way; but every desirable good shall be present at the same moment, shall replenish all thy affections, and satiate them to the full.

There I will give thee glory for the contumely thou hast suffered; a garment of praise for thy sorrow; and for having been seated here in the lowest place, the throne of My kingdom for ever.

There will the fruit of obedience appear, there will the labour of penance rejoice, and humble subjection shall be gloriously crowned.

7. Now, therefore, bow thyself down humbly under the hands of all, and heed not who it was that said or commanded this.

But let it be thy great care, that whether thy superior, or inferior, or equal, require any thing of thee, or hint at any thing, thou take all in good part, and labour with a sincere will to perform it.

*Let one seek this, another that; let is man glory in this thing, another in*

that, and be praised a thousand thousand times; but thou, for thy part, rejoice neither in this nor in that, but in the contempt of thyself, and in My good pleasure and honour alone.

This is what thou hast to wish for, that, whether in life or in death, God may be always glorified in thee.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

WE are unwilling to suffer the trials which God sends us, and would receive nothing from Him but continual consolations; these however are only given to support us under dryness and desolation of spirit; he imparts them to us to enable us to support his apparent rigour, which in reality is His goodness towards us, by which He spares not in time, that He may be merciful to us for eternity. Think not therefore that thou art rejected by God, when thou dost experience nothing but disgust in His service; but do faithfully whatever thou wouldst then do to please Him, if thou didst experience the greatest delight in serving Him, and it shall be well with thee. Humble thyself on such occasions, think thyself unworthy of the least consolation or support. The Lord is pleased that thou shouldst serve Him without any sensible comfort, and by



this means conquer thy repugnance to good, and thy inclination for evil, through a pure desire of pleasing Him, and a real dread of offending Him. Ah! how abundantly will a happy eternity repay thee for the sufferings and fatigues of this life, if thou wilt but bear them now with confidence, fidelity, and patience! Take courage then, my soul, a moment's suffering is eternal joy.

## PRAYER.

GRANT, O Lord, that my whole delight may be to please Thee, and to do and to suffer whatever Thou willest. No, my God, I ask no other consolation than the happiness of being faithful to Thee, because I desire to love Thee more for Thyself than on my own account. May Thy love, O God, triumph over all the pursuits and repugnances of self-love! Mayest Thou be all to me in time, that Thou mayest be my all for eternity. Amen.

## CHAPTER L.

HOW A DESOLATE PERSON OUGHT TO OFFER HIMSELF INTO THE HANDS OF GOD.

*O Lord God, holy Father, be Thou now and for ever blessed; for as Thou wilt, so*

is it done, and what thou dost is always good.

Let Thy servant rejoice in Thee, not in himself nor in any other; for Thou alone art true joy, Thou art my hope and my crown, Thou art my joy and my honour, O Lord.

What hath Thy servant but what he hath received from Thee, even without any merit on his part?

All things are Thine, both what Thou hast given and what Thou hast made.

I am poor, and in labours from my youth, and my soul is saddened sometimes even unto tears, and sometimes too my spirit is disturbed within herself by reason of impending suffering.

2. I desire the joy of peace; I beg earnestly for the peace of Thy children, who are fed by thee in the light of consolation.

If Thou give peace, if Thou infuse holy joy, the soul of Thy servant shall be full of melody, and devout in Thy praise.

But if Thou withdraw Thyself, as Thou

art very often accustomed to do, he will not be able to run in the way of Thy commandments, but must rather bow down his knees, and strike his breast; because it is not with him as yesterday and the day before, when Thy lamp shone over his head, and he was protected under the shadow of Thy wings from assaulting temptations.

3. O just Father, holy, and ever to be praised, the hour is come for Thy servant to be tried.

O Father worthy of all love, it is fitting that Thy servant should at this hour suffer something for Thee.

O Father always to be honoured, the hour is come which from all eternity Thou didst foresee would arrive; that Thy servant for a short time should be oppressed exteriorly, but interiorly should ever live unto Thee; that he should be for a little slighted and humbled, and should fail in the sight of men.

*That he should be severely afflicted with sufferings and languors, that so he*

may rise again with Thee in the dawning of a new light, and be glorified in heaven. O holy Father, Thou hast so appointed; and such is Thy will; and that has come to pass which Thou hast ordained.

4. For this is a favour to Thy friend, that he should suffer and be afflicted in this world for the love of Thee, how often soever, by whomsoever, and in what manner soever, Thou permittest it to befall him.

Without Thy design and providence, and without cause, nothing happeneth in the world.

It is good for me, O Lord, that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy justifications, and that I may cast away all pride of heart and presumption.

It is profitable for me that shame hath covered my face, that I may rather seek my comfort from Thee than from men.

I have also hereby learned to fear Thy inscrutable judgment; who afflictest the just with the impious, but not without equity and justice.

5. I return Thee thanks that Thou hast

not spared my evil ways, but hast bruised me with bitter stripes, inflicting anguish, and sending distress both within and without.

Of all things under heaven, there is one that can comfort me but Thou, O Lord my God, the heavenly Physician of souls, who woundest and healest, bringest down to hell and leadest back again.

Thy discipline is upon me, and Thy rod myself shall instruct me.

6. Behold, O beloved Father, I am in Thy hands; I bow myself down under the rod of Thy correction.

Strike Thou my back and my neck, that I may bend my perversity to Thy will.

Make me a pious and humble disciple, as Thou in Thy goodness art wont to do, that I may walk according to every indication of Thy will.

Myself and all that are mine I commit to Thee for Thy correction; it is better to be chastised here than hereafter.

*Thou knowest all and every thing, and*

nothing in man's conscience lieth hidden from Thee.

Coming events Thou knowest before they happen; and Thou hast no need to be taught or admonished by any one of what is being done on earth.

Thou knowest what is expedient for my progress, and how much tribulation serveth to cleanse away the rust of sin.

Do with me according to Thy desired good pleasure; and despise not my sinful life, to no one better or more clearly known than to Thyself alone.

7. Grant me, O Lord, to know what I ought to know; to love what I ought to love; to praise that which is most pleasing to Thee; to esteem that which appeareth to Thee valuable; to abhor that which is filthy in Thy sight.

Suffer me not to judge according to the sight of the outward eyes, nor to give sentence according to the hearing of the ears of ignorant men; but to determine upon matters both visible and spiritual with true judgment and, above all things,

r to seek Thy good will and pleas-

1. The senses of men are often deceived giving judgments; and the lovers of the world are deceived in loving only visible things.

How is a man a whit the better for being reputed greater by man?

The deceitful deceiveth the deceitful, the vain deceiveth the vain, the blind the blind, the weak the weak, as often as he deceiveth him; and, in truth, doth rather mislead him, whilst he vainly praiseth him.

For how much soever each one is in the eyes of men, so much is he and no more, than the humble Saint Francis.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

As God is the sovereign purity and the essence of sanctity, so He is pleased to purify our souls by the most painful and humiliating sufferings in this life, or by torments the most acute and piercing in purgatory, to fit them for the possession of Himself in the kingdom of heaven. *these means He brings them to that degree*

all human attachments, and, above  
suits of self-love, habitual faults.  
2dly, it is to be ready to receive  
Christ, trials the most humiliating  
contrary to its own inclinations; 3dly  
to port and to fight without ceasing  
most violent and importunate trials  
having perpetual recourse to God  
confidence in His goodness; 4thly  
ings, it is to keep up a continual  
punction, mortification, and of a  
which will preserve us from falling;  
it is to be most diligent in keeping  
the senses and the heart, that no  
human satisfaction may enter in  
be humble, dependent, little, and



often do I pretend that it is the result of a religious fear and anxiety, lest these trials should end in sin, instead of victory. But dost Thou not know better than I do, O Father of mercies, and God of all consolation? dost Thou not see this danger? and is not this sufficient to induce Thee, the best of fathers, to assist me? Alas! O Lord, abandon me not, and deliver me not to the desires of my corrupt heart. Remember, O Jesus, how much I have cost Thee, and suffer not Thy torments and death to plead for me in vain. I ardently desire that peace which Thou givest to Thy children, and I find nothing within me but trouble and agitation. Why am I so averse to good, and so much inclined to evil? Why is my soul so frequently bewildered amidst the irregular demands of my passions, and carried by its first impulse towards every thing that is contrary to Thy holy will? I mourn over the corruption of my heart, and from Thee alone do I hope for deliverance. It is just I should suffer, on account of my sins; but it is not just I should sin in my sufferings. May I never offend Thee and ruin myself by impatience under afflictions, but, O God, grant that by them I may sanctify my soul and secure my salvation. Amen.

## CHAPTER LI.

THAT WE MUST EXERCISE OURSELVES IN HUMBLE  
WORKS WHEN WE CANNOT ATTAIN TO THE HIGH-  
EST.

Son, thou canst not always continue in the more fervent desire of virtue, nor remain constantly in the higher degree of contemplation; but it must needs be that thou sometimes, by reason of original corruption, descend to low things, and bear the burden of this corruptible life, even against thy will and with weariness.

As long as thou carriest about with thee thy mortal body, thou shalt feel weariness and heaviness of heart.

Thou oughtest, therefore, while in the flesh, oftentimes to bewail the burden of the flesh, for that thou canst not unceasingly give thyself up to spiritual exercises and divine contemplation.

2. On such occasions it is expedient for thee to betake thyself to humble and exterior works, and recreate thyself in good

actions; to await My coming and heavenly visitation with an assured hope; to bear with patience thy banishment and the aridity of thy mind, until thou be again visited by Me and freed from all anxieties.

For I will cause thee to forget thy pains, and to enjoy internal quiet.

I will spread open before thee the pleasant fields of the Scriptures, that thy heart being enlarged, thou mayest begin to run in the way of My commandments.

And then shalt thou say: The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the future glory, which shall be revealed in us.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

How great is the difference between the sanctity of the blessed in heaven, and of men upon earth! the one is exempt from pain and full of sweetness, the other is replete with bitterness and misery; the one belongs to that delightful abode our true *country* the other is our portion in this *vale of tears*.

*In eternity, we shall love God in possessing*

Him, and enjoying His felicity ; in time, we must love Him by suffering for His sake, and patiently carrying the cross of Jesus Christ. There, we shall be happy in God, and secure of His love for ever ; here, we know not whether we be worthy of love or hatred. In the time of spiritual dryness and desolation, let us employ ourselves in doing something exteriorly for God, since we find nothing within that sensibly calls us to Him ; but at the same time let us not neglect any of the interior exercises of prayer, recollection, and continual recourse to God for His support and assistance.

PRAYER.

O MY God ! how long shall my sorrowful and rigorous exile keep me at a distance from Thee, uncertain as to my eternal happiness, and even in danger of losing it ! How am I ashamed of appearing in Thy presence, miserable, weak, and defiled with sin ! Turn not, O Lord, Thy face away from me ; for there is no consolation but in Thy presence. Recall me, O God, recall me to Thyself by interior recollection ; and may it supply the want of Thy glorious presence, and console me when I think of Thee, and of the misery of not being able to see and to possess Thee. Amen.

## CHAPTER LII.

MAN OUGHT NOT TO ESTEEM HIMSELF WORTHY OF CONSOLATION, BUT RATHER DESERVING OF PUNISHMENT.

I am not worthy of thy consolation or of any spiritual visitation; and where thou justly dost deal with me, thou leavest me poor and desolate.

Could I shed tears like a sea, yet I not be worthy of Thy consolation. Therefore I deserve nothing else but to be scourged and punished, because I grievously and often offended Thee, and many things have very much against Thee.

That, according to just reason, I do deserve the least consolation.

Thou, O gracious and merciful God, wilt not that Thy works perish, to the riches of Thy goodness towards us, *of mercy, vouchsafest beyond all to comfort Thy servant above measure.*

For Thy consolations are not like the discourses of men.

2. What have I done, O Lord, that Thou shouldst impart to me some heavenly consolation?

I can remember nothing of good that I have ever done, that I was, always prone to vice, and very slow towards amendment.

It is true, and I cannot deny it; if I should say otherwise, Thou wouldst stand against me, and there would be none to defend me.

What have I deserved for my sins but hell and everlasting fire?

In truth, I confess that I am worthy of all scorn and contempt; neither is it fitting that I should remain among Thy devout ones.

And although I hear this unwillingly, yet for truth's sake, I will, against myself, condemn my sins, that so I may the easier deserve to obtain Thy mercy.

3. What shall I say, guilty as I am, and full of all confusion?

My mouth can utter nothing but only this one word : I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned ; have mercy on me and pardon me.

Suffer me a little that I may mourn out my grief, before I go to the darksome land that is covered with the dismal shade of death.

What dost Thou especially require of a guilty and wretched sinner, but that he should be contrite, and humble himself for his sins ?

In true contrition and humility of heart is brought forth hope of forgiveness ; the troubled conscience is reconciled ; lost grace is recovered ; man is secured from the wrath to come ; and God and the penitent soul meet together with a holy kiss.

4. Humble contrition for sins is an acceptable sacrifice to Thee, O Lord, of far sweeter odour in Thy sight than the burning of frankincense.

*This is also that pleasing ointment which Thou wouldst have to be poured*

upon Thy sacred feet : for Thou never hast despised a contrite and humble heart.

Here is a place of refuge from the face of the wrath of the enemy.

Here is amended and washed away whatever of defilement has been elsewhere contracted.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

ALTHOUGH we should consider ourselves in all our sufferings, as most unworthy of receiving consolation from God, and as deserving of the heaviest chastisements, having so often merited hell, it is good, nevertheless, to bewail our exile, and to sigh, in the sense of our miseries, for the Father of mercy, and the God of all consolation ; for a cry of lamentation from a soul penetrated with gratitude to God, for His goodness, and with a deep sorrow for having offended Him, is capable of disarming His anger, and of inclining Him to mercy and pardon.

How is a soul when loaded with the weight of its iniquities, consoled by the certainty of meeting with mercy from God, when it returns to Him with sincere sorrow for sin, and a firm and effectual resolution of renouncing it, and leading a better life for the future ! Then God, who is more desirous to pardon us than we are to crave



His mercy, ceases to be our Judge, and becomes our Father. Forgetting what we were, He remembers only what we now are, and treats us with as much bounty, as though we had never offended Him.

## PRAYER.

GIVE me, O God, that sincere sorrow and contrition which may purge away all my offences. I can commit sin of myself, but I cannot repent nor free myself from it without Thy grace and assistance. Yes, Father, I have sinned, and have offended Thy goodness; and this fills me with grief and confusion. Chastise me, but forgive me, and let my punishment be to hate myself that I may love Thee. I have sinned against Heaven and before Thee; I am not worthy to be numbered amongst Thy children; receive me as one of Thy servants. Then, happy shall I be, if, feeding upon the bread of tears, living in labour, in a reverential fear of Thee, and in an exact obedience to Thy will, I pass my life in mourning and sighing, in punishing myself and avenging Thee, endeavouring never to pardon in myself what Thou art so willing to forgive me! Take away my life from me, O my Saviour, or keep me from sin, for I can no longer live to offend Thee. Grant that I may frequently *recollect this my desire*, and that the remembrance of it may ever withhold me from *displeasing Thee*. Amen.

## CHAPTER LIII.

THAT THE GRACE OF GOD IS NOT COMMUNICATED  
TO THE EARTHLY-MINDED.

SON, My grace is precious; it suffereth not itself to be mingled with external things nor with earthly consolations.

Thou must, therefore, cast away every obstacle to grace, if thou desire to receive its infusion.

Choose for thyself a retired place; love to dwell with thyself alone; seek not to be talking with any one, but rather pour forth devout prayer to God, that thou mayest keep thy mind in compunction, and thy conscience pure.

Esteem the whole world as nothing; prefer attendance on God before all external occupations.

For thou canst not both attend to Me and at the same time delight thyself in transitory things.

Thou must be sequestered from thy acquaintance and from thy dearest friends,

and keep thy mind disengaged from all temporal consolation.

So the blessed apostle Peter beseeches the faithful of Christ to keep themselves as strangers and pilgrims in this world.

2. Oh, what great confidence shall he have at death, who is not detained by an affection to any thing in the world !

But an infirm soul is not yet capable of having a heart thus perfectly disengaged from all things, neither doth the animal man understand the liberty of the interior man.


But if he will be truly spiritual, he must renounce as well those that are near as those that are afar off, and beware of none more than of himself.

If thou perfectly overcomest thyself, thou shalt more easily subdue all things else.

The perfect victory is to triumph over oneself.

For whosoever keepeth himself in subjection, so that sensuality obeyeth reason, and reason in all things is obedient to Me,

•



the axe to the root, in order to  
and destroy secret and inordinat  
tion to thyself and to every p  
material good.

From this vice, that man l  
too inordinately, depends almos  
soever must be radically overco  
being vanquished and brought  
great peace and tranquillity wi  
ately ensue.

But because few labour to di  
to themselves, or fully to ai  
themselves, therefore do they  
tangled in themselves, nor ca

## PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

To withdraw the heart from ourselves and all created things, we should, first, frequently raise our affections to God, and endeavour to love Him in and above all things; 2dly, we should renounce all voluntary attachments to creatures and to self-seeking; 3dly, we should separate and wean ourselves from all that is naturally pleasing to us, by regarding all things as passing away, and ourselves as pilgrims and strangers in a foreign land, who must allow themselves no delay in their journey, but pass forward on their way.

When thoroughly impressed with these words of the Apostle: *We have not a permanent dwelling-place here, but we look for one above*, how little does a Christian feel attached to the goods, the vanities, and pleasures of this world, knowing that all these things pass away, and must finally end in death! It is easy, says St. Jerome, to despise all earthly things, when we reflect that we must die and leave them all behind us.

Why then does the figure of this world, which passes away and escapes from our sight, make so deep an impression upon our hearts, and the good things of eternity, which alone never fade, affect us so little! Why should we be so strongly attached to what we possess but for a moment,

earthly things, and cleave to those which are eternal, which will be given to change for the little I renounce in this the love of Thee. Grant me, O God only that which I shall love for ever esteem every thing as unworthy of my soul, which is not the Eternal and Good.

“How little does this world appear Ignatius, “when I view the heavens little do the material heavens and this universe appear, when I think of God!” Grant that in like manner, pressed with the idea of Thy immensity may yield my whole soul to Thee. A

## CHAPTER LIV.

### OF THE DIFFERENT MOTIONS OF NATURE AND GRACE.

1. observe diligently the motions of nature and grace; for they move with great contrariety and subtlety, and hardly be distinguished but by a spirit-man, and one that is inwardly illuminated.

All men indeed desire good, and pretend to something good in what they say and do; therefore, under the appearance of good, many are deceived.

2. Nature is crafty and draweth away many, ensnareth them and deceiveth them, and always proposeth self as her end.

But grace walketh in simplicity, turneth aside from all appearance of evil, offereth no deceits, and doth all things purely for God, in whom also it resteth as its last end.

3. *Nature is neither willing to be justified, to be restrained, to be over-*

not at enjoying its own liberty, but  
be kept under discipline, and desirous  
to have the command over any creature  
under God ever to live, stand, and  
for God's sake is ever ready to  
bow down unto every human creature.

4. Nature laboureth for its own  
best, and considereth what gain it  
may derive from another.

But grace considereth not what  
is advantageous and profitable to  
itself, but rather what may be beneficial to  
others.

5. Nature willingly receiveth  
all that is offered to it, but grace  
receiveth nothing without thanksgiving.



7. Nature loveth ease and bodily repose.

But grace cannot be idle, and willingly embraceth labour.

8. Nature seeketh to have things that are curious and beautiful, and abhorreth such as are cheap and coarse.

But grace delighteth in that which is plain and humble, rejecteth not coarse things, nor refuseth to be clad in old garments.

9. Nature hath regard to temporal things, rejoiceth at earthly gains, is troubled at losses, and is irritated at every slight injurious word.

But grace attendeth to things eternal, and cleaveth not to temporal things; neither is disturbed at the loss of things, nor exasperated with hard words, for it placeth its treasure and its joy in heaven, where nothing perisheth.

10. Nature is covetous, and liketh rather to take than to give, and loveth to have things *exclusive* and private.

*But grace is kind and open-hearted,*

shunneth private interest, is contented with little, and judgeth it more blessed to give than to receive.

11. Nature inclineth a man to creatures; to his own body, to vanities, and to running to and fro.

But grace draweth to God and to all virtues, renounceth creatures, flieth the world, hateth the desires of the flesh, restraineth wanderings, blusheth to appear in public.

12. Nature willingly receiveth some exterior comfort, in which the senses may be gratified.

But grace seeketh to be comforted in God alone, and beyond all things visible to be delighted in the Sovereign Good.

13. Nature doth all for her own gain and interest; she can do nothing *gratis*; but hopeth to gain something equal or better for her good deeds, or else praise or favour; and coveteth to have her actions and gifts and sayings highly estimated.

But grace seeketh nothing temporal.

or requireth any other recompense but  
od alone for its reward; nor desireth  
y thing more of the necessities of this  
e than may serve her to obtain things  
ernal.

14. Nature rejoiceth in a multitude of  
ends and kindred, glorieth in noble  
ace and descent, smileth on them that  
e in power, flattereth the rich, and ap-  
audeth such as are like itself.

But grace loveth even enemies, and is  
t puffed up with having a great many  
ends, nor hath any value for rank or  
rth, unless when joined with greater  
rtue; rather favoureth the poor than  
e rich; sympathiseth more with the in-  
cent than with the powerful; rejoiceth  
th him that loveth the truth, and not  
th the deceitful; ever exhorteth the good  
be zealous for better gifts, and by the  
ercise of virtues to become like to the  
m of God.

15. Nature easily complaineth of want  
*d of trouble.*

*Grace beareth poverty with constancy.*

tributeth no good to self, nor  
arrogantly presume.

Grace doth not contend, nor  
own opinion to others; but  
reasoning and understanding submit  
to the eternal Wisdom and to  
scrutiny.

17. Nature coveteth to know  
to hear news; desireth to appear  
and to have experience of men  
the senses; longeth to be talked  
and to do those things which  
praise and admiration.

miration; and from every thing, and in every knowledge, to seek the fruit of utility, and the praise and honour of God.

She desireth not to have self, or what belongeth to self, exalted; but wisheth that God may be blessed in His gifts, who bestoweth all things through mere love.

18. This grace is a supernatural light, and a certain special gift of God, the proper mark of the elect, and pledge of eternal salvation; which elevateth a man from earthly things to love such as are heavenly, and from carnal maketh him spiritual.

Wherefore, as nature is the more kept down and subdued, with so much the greater abundance is grace infused; and every day by new visitations the interior man is reformed according to the image of God.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

WHAT is it to repose in God as in our last end? *It is to desire, to seek, and to love only Him; it is to do and to suffer all things for His sake; it*

is to acquiesce without any reserve in His holy designs; it is to will only what He wills; it is never to go astray, nor turn aside from the way of His ordinances; it is, in fine, to place our whole happiness in pleasing Him, and in not gratifying ourselves; but to do this, is contrary to nature; grace alone can accomplish it.

I. Nature has always for its object self-satisfaction; but grace leads us to do violence to ourselves, that is, to deny and renounce ourselves in all things.

II. Nature is unwilling to die, to captivate itself, or to be made subject; but grace captivates the soul, restrains and subjects it to what is most hard and contrary to its inclinations; so that it gives up its own liberty on all occasions, fights against its own humours, and yields itself to God; and to honour His sovereign dominion, it rejoices in humiliations, restraint, and subjection.

III. Nature ever wishes to rule over others; but grace humbles us under the all-powerful hand of God, and makes us obedient for His love to those whom He has appointed in His place over us.

IV. Nature labours always for its own interest, to please and to establish itself; but grace labours only for God's sake, and watches incessantly over the motions of the heart, to preserve it from

2, and to enable it to seek only its establishment in Jesus Christ.

V. Nature is pleased with the esteem and praises of men, presuming on its own deserts; it grace makes us think ourselves unworthy of them, and refers all honour to God, and is so nice at this head, that it will not permit the humble and faithful soul to make the least voluntary inference of vanity towards itself, lest it should take some degree of complacency in the good which it performs.

VI. Nature is afraid of disappointments, and shuns contempt; but grace receives these, and willingly endures them as justly inflicted upon us as sinners, and even makes us grateful

to Jesus Christ for allowing us to share with him what was wont to be the delight of His heart.

VII. Nature loves the repose of a soft, indolent, and useless life; but grace seeks only labour; she dreads and avoids all useless thoughts, words, and actions; and not being able to endure indolence, either of the heart or mind, she leads the one to be impressed with a sense of the presence of God, and the other to live for love.

VIII. Nature is attracted by every thing that is great, beautiful, splendid, or commodious; but grace despises and shuns all these, and thinks

nothing great but what is divine, supernatural, and eternal.

The more, however, nature is repressed, the more abundantly does grace communicate itself to the soul, renew it in the interior spirit, and establish it perfectly in God.

#### PRAYER.

It is time, O Lord, I should cast myself on Thy mercy, to obtain the pardon of my sins, and on Thy love, to follow all its attractions. Support me, O Lord, and strengthen me by Thy grace against the inclinations of nature and self-love; for, of myself, it is impossible to resist and conquer the motions of corrupt nature, which is ever seeking its own gratification, in direct opposition to Thy holy will. Grant us Thy grace to rise superior to nature, to correspond faithfully with the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, to conquer and renounce ourselves, that we may be renewed and established in the possession of Thy love. Amen.





## CHAPTER LV.

### OF THE CORRUPTION OF NATURE, AND OF THE EFFICACY OF DIVINE GRACE.

O LORD, my God, who hast created me to  
hine own image and likeness, grant me  
his grace, which Thou hast shewn to be  
o great, and so necessary to salvation,  
that I may overcome my most corrupt  
ature, which draweth me to sin and to  
ardition.

For I perceive in my flesh the law of  
contradicting the law of my mind,  
leading me captive to obey sensuality  
many things.

Neither can I resist the passions thereof,  
is Thy most holy grace, infused with  
ur into my heart, assist me.

I stand in need of Thy grace and of  
grace, in order to overcome nature,  
prone to evil from its youth/  
fallen as it is through the first man  
and corrupted, by sin, the punish-  
that stain hath descended upon

all mankind ; so that nature itself, which by Thee was created good and right, is now taken for vice and the infirmity of corrupt nature ; because the motion thereof, left to itself, draweth to evil and to things below.

For the little strength which remaineth is but as a little spark hidden under ashes.

This is the self-same natural reason, encompassed with much darkness, having yet the judgment of good and evil, and the discernment of truth and falsehood ; though it be unable to fulfil all that it approves ; neither doth it now enjoy the full light of truth, nor the former healthfulness of its affections.

3. Hence it is, O my God, that according to the inward man, I am delighted with Thy law, knowing Thy command to be good, just, and holy, both for the reproof of all evil, and for the avoiding of sin.

And yet in the flesh I serve the law of sin, while I obey sensuality rather than reason.

Hence it is, that to will that which is good is present with me, but how to accomplish it I find not.

(Hence I often make many good purposes, but because grace is wanting to help my weakness, through a light resistance I recoil and fall off.)

Hence cometh it to pass, that I know the way of perfection, and see clearly enough what I ought to do, but pressed down with the weight of my own corruption, I rise not to the things that are more perfect.

4. Oh, how supremely necessary for us, O Lord, is Thy grace, to begin that which is good, to go forward with it, and accomplish it!

For without it I can do nothing; but I do all things in Thee, when grace strengtheneth me.

1. grace, truly celestial, without which our own merits are nothing, neither are the gifts of nature to be esteemed!

*arts, nor riches, nor beauty or  
no genius, no eloquence avail*

sought in Thy sight, O Lord, without grace.

For the gifts of nature are common to the good and to the bad; but grace or divine love is the proper gift of the elect, with which they that are adorned are esteemed worthy of eternal life.

This grace is so excellent, that neither the gift of prophecy, nor the working of miracles, nor any speculation, how sublime soever, is of any value without it.

No, not even faith, nor hope, nor any other virtues, are acceptable to Thee, without charity and grace.

5. Oh, most blessed grace, which maketh the poor in spirit rich in virtues, and renderest him who is rich in many good things humble of heart; come, descend upon me, replenish me early with thy consolation, lest my soul faint through weariness and dryness of mind.

I beseech Thee, O Lord, that I may find grace in Thine eyes; for sufficient for me is Thy grace, though I obtain none of those things which nature desires.

If I be tempted and afflicted with many tribulations, I will fear no evils whilst Thy grace is with me.

(This alone is my strength, this alone giveth counsel and help/

This is more mighty than all my enemies, and wiser than all the wise.

6. Thy grace is the mistress of truth, the teacher of discipline, the light of the heart, the consoler of anguish, the banisher of sorrow, the expeller of fear, the nurse of devotion, the producer of tears.

(What am I without this but a withered branch and a useless trunk, meet only to be cast away?/

Therefore, O Lord, let Thy grace always go before and follow me, and make me ever intent upon good works, through Jesus Christ Thy Son. Amen.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

WE do justice to ourselves when we mistrust our own strength, and to God, when we confide in the assistance of His grace. This is never *wanting to us*; but we are often wanting in our *correspondence with it*, though the only means

of insuring salvation, is to be faithful to its attractions, for they would lead us to the practice of every virtue.

Human nature having been corrupted by the first man's sin, the effect of this corruption, as well as the stain of sin, descended to all mankind; hence are we constrained to fight incessantly against the motions of nature, and to follow those of grace. Without offering this holy violence to ourselves, by which we subdue and renounce our own inclinations, it would be impossible to be saved. In the state of innocence, all in man being orderly and subject to God, on account of original justice, the passions did not revolt against reason; but in our present state of sin, concupiscence continually rebels against the soul: this we must never cease to resist, until we cease to live.

#### PRAYER.

WHEN, O God, shall Thy grace reign in our hearts, and subject them to the influence of Thy love? He who knows how to estimate the value and excellence of Thy grace, O Lord, which is a participation of Thy divine nature, and a holy infusion of Thy goodness into our souls, will suffer the loss of all things else, rather than be deprived of such a treasure, and will not hesitate to make any sacrifice, however great, to preserve it.

When I consider, O Lord, that those graces which I reject, or neglect, have been purchased for me at the price of Thy suffering and precious blood, how am I covered with confusion, for having made so bad a use of them, and for having preferred even trifles before them ! Well may the account I must one day give of all the inspirations which I have neglected, as of so many drops of Thy sacred blood dissipated or profaned, fill me with alarm and terror, and induce me henceforth to correspond with them most faithfully, that I may not forfeit my salvation. Amen.

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## CHAPTER LVI.

THAT WE OUGHT TO DENY OURSELVES, AND IMITATE  
CHRIST BY THE CROSS.

SON, as much as thou canst go out of thyself, so much wilt thou be able to enter into Me.

As the desiring nothing exteriorly bringeth peace, so doth the relinquishing *thyself interiorly* unite thee unto God.

*I will have thee learn the perfect re*

nunciation of thyself, according will, without contradiction or com  
 Follow Me: I am the way, the and the life.

Without the way, there is no without the truth, there is no ~~in~~ without the life, there is no living.

I am the way which thou must the truth which thou must believe life which thou must hope for.

I am the way inviolable, the ~~in~~ fallible, the life interminable.

I am the straightest way, the so truth, the true life, the blessed ~~in~~ uncreated life.

If thou abide in My way, thou know the truth, and the truth shall thee free, and thou shalt attain life lasting.

2. If thou wilt enter into life, keep commandments.

If thou wilt know the truth, Me: if thou wilt be perfect, sell all

If thou wilt be My disciple, deny self.



If thou wilt possess a blessed life, despise this present life.

If thou wilt be exalted in heaven, humble thyself in this world.

If thou wilt reign with Me, bear the Cross with Me.

For none but the servants of the Cross find the way of bliss and true light.

3. Lord Jesus, forasmuch as Thy way is narrow, and despised by the world, grant that I may follow Thee with the world's contempt.

For the servant is not greater than his lord, neither is the disciple above his master.

Let Thy servant be exercised in Thy life, for there is my salvation and true sanctification.

Whatever beside this I read or hear doth neither recreate nor fully delight me.

4. Son, since thou knowest these things, and hast read them all, happy shalt thou be if thou do them.

*He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me;*

and I will love him, and I will manifest Myself unto him, and I will make him sit with Me in the kingdom of My Father.

5. Lord Jesus, as Thou hast said and hast promised, so let it be indeed, and may it be my lot to merit it! *I have received* I have received from Thy hand, the Cross; I will bear it, and bear it even unto death, as Thou hast laid it upon me.

Truly, the life of the good religious is a cross; but it is also the guide to paradise.

We have begun; we may not go back, nor may we leave off.

6. Take courage, brethren; let us go forward together; Jesus will be with us.

For the sake of Jesus, we have taken up this Cross; for Jesus's sake, let us persevere in it.

He will be our Helper, who is our Captain and our Forerunner.

Behold, our King marcheth before us, who will fight for us.


Let us follow Him manfully; let no

one fear terrors ; let us be ready to die valiantly in battle ; nor let us bring disgrace upon our glory by flying from the Cross.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

*If any man will come after Me, says our divine Redeemer, let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross daily, and follow Me.* In this is included the whole practice of a Christian life, and the way marked out by which we may securely go to eternal salvation, for Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life ; the way we must follow, the truth we must believe, and the life we must hope for. To live as Christians, and to secure salvation, we must begin by renouncing and dying to ourselves : for this renunciation—this spirit of self-denial, is the first principle of the gospel, the fundamental law of Christianity, our most essential duty, and the most effectual means of obtaining salvation. It is this interior mortification, this circumcision of the heart, this retrenchment of all criminal, dangerous, or useless indulgences, which constitutes the difference between the elect and the reprobate. The character of our present sinful state, should be that of penance, which is the end of Christianity and the assurance of salvation.

*To carry our cross with Jesus Christ, is to*



the evils which happen to us from God or the injustice of man; it is contempt as our due, and to be our greatest misfortune to suffer nothing for our sovereign happiness, to suffer for love.

**PRAYER.**

O DIVINE Saviour, how few are with Thee on Calvary, yet how glad to accompany Thee on Thabor and to see Thee from the Cross, to live in tranquillity; while each one desires and sees that one chooses to suffer for Thee; only sure proof we can give Thee is to be willing to suffer with Thee Thy painful example.

## CHAPTER LVII.

**THAT A MAN SHOULD NOT BE TOO MUCH DEJECTED  
WHEN HE FALLS INTO SOME DEFECTS.**

Son, patience and humility under adversity please me more than much consolation and devotion in prosperity.

Why art thou afflicted at a little matter said against thee?

If it had been more, thou oughtest not to have been disturbed.

But now let it pass; it is not the first, or any thing new; nor will it be the last, if thou live long.

Thou art valiant enough, so long as no adversity cometh in thy way.

Thou canst also give good advice, and knowest how to encourage others with thy speech; but when any unexpected trouble cometh at thine own door, then thy counsel and thy courage fail thee.

Consider thy great frailty, which thou *often experiencest* in trifling occurrences; *yet still do they happen* for thy salvation,

as often as these or similar trials befall thee.

2. Put it out of thy heart as well as thou canst; and if tribulation have touched thee, yet let it not cast thee down, nor long entangle thee.

At least bear it patiently, if thou canst not joyfully.

And although thou be reluctant to bear it, and feelest indignation, yet repress thyself, and suffer no inordinate word to come out of thy mouth, whereby little ones may be offended.

This commotion excited will quickly be allayed, and inward grief will be sweetened by returning grace.

I still live, saith the Lord, ready to help thee, and comfort thee more than before, if thou put thy trust in Me, and devoutly call upon Me.

3. Be thou even-minded, and gird thyself for greater endurance.

All is not lost, though thou feel thyself often afflicted or grievously tempted.

Man thou art, and not God ; thou art flesh, not an Angel.

How canst thou continue ever in the same state of virtue, when this was wanting to the Angels in heaven, and to the first man in paradise ?

I am He who raiseth up to safety them that mourn ; and them that know their own infirmity I promote to My own divinity.

4. O Lord, blessed be Thy word ; it is sweeter to my mouth than honey and the honeycomb.

What should I do in my so great tribulations and necessities, didst Thou not strengthen me with Thy holy words ?

Provided only I shall reach at last the haven of salvation, what doth it matter how many or how great trials I shall have endured ?

Grant me a good end, grant me a happy passage out of this world.

Be mindful of me, O my God, and direct *me in the right path to Thy kingdom. Amen.*

pleasing to God, than the enjoyment; and hence, that the greatest consolation the soul should be to be deprived of consolation but that of being ever fixed to the crucified Redeemer.

When tempted and inclined to sin, turn away from our evil inclinations, and with all the strength and courage we have recourse to our Lord for help, and to the blessed Virgin for her protection. Our sense of evil must not deject or depress us, but elevate us to God. In Him let us place our confidence, and with an extreme aversion from sin, withdraw our minds, as far as possible, from the sinful objects which affect our hearts, from the criminal pleasures



us remember, in our interior afflictions, is not lost because we are in trouble and temptation. Let us resist temptation, to humiliation, and believe that before be elevated to a union with God, we rst descend into the depth of our own

PRAYER.

IT not, O Lord, my afflictions to become able to salvation; and if I do not suffer ith joy, grant at least I may endure them tience. It is good for me to be humbled, may learn to keep Thy holy ordinances. wretched should I be, to make the s of this life serve only to consign me to torments and despair! May then the gs which Thou sendest me, O God, be e pledges of my salvation. Amen.

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CHAPTER LVIII.

SEARCHING INTO HIGH MATTERS, NOR SCRU-  
 KING THE SECRET JUDGMENTS OF GOD.

eware of disputing about high mat-  
*d of the hidden judgments of God:*  
*is man is so forsaken, and that*

other raised to so great grace; or why this person is so much afflicted; and that so highly exalted.

Such things exceed all human comprehension, nor is any reason or disputation competent to investigate the divine judgments.

When, therefore, the enemy suggests such to thee, or certain curious men inquire into them, answer thou with the Prophet, Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgment is right. And again: The judgments of the Lord are true, justified in themselves.

My judgments are to be feared, not to be discussed, because they are incomprehensible to human understanding.

2. In like manner, do not be inquisitive or dispute concerning the merits of the Saints; who is more holy than another, or who greater in the kingdom of heaven?

Such oftentimes breed strifes and unprofitable contention, and nourish also pride and vain-glory; whence arise envia

and dissensions, while one man proudly refers this Saint, and another that.

Now, to wish to know and to search into such matters is of no profit, but rather displeaseth the Saints: for I am not the God of dissension, but of peace, which peace consisteth rather in true humility than in self-exaltation.

3. Some by a zeal of preference are attracted with greater affection towards these or those Saints; but this affection is rather human than divine.


I am He who made all the Saints; I gave them grace, I have granted them glory.

I know the merits of each; I prevented them with the blessings of My sweetness.

I foreknew My beloved ones before all ages.

I chose them out of the world; they did not first choose Me.

I called them by grace, I attracted them by mercy; I brought them safe through many temptations; I poured into them abundant consolations; I gave them



am to be blessed above all  
honoured in each, whom I h  
riously magnified and predest  
out any foregoing merits of t

He, therefore, that despises  
least of My Saints, honour  
greatest; for I have made be  
great.

- And he that derogateth fr  
of the Saints, derogateth als  
and from all others in the  
heaven.

They are all one through

away altogether from love of self, they live absorbed in the love of Me, in whom also they rest by a happy fruition.


Nor is there any thing that can turn them away or depress them; for they who are full of the Eternal Truth burn with the fire of unquenchable charity.

Therefore let carnal and animal men, who know not how to love any thing but their own selfish gratifications, forbear to dispute of the state of the Saints. They take away and add according to their own inclination, not as it pleaseth the Eternal Truth.

6. In many it is ignorance, more especially on the part of such as, being but little enlightened, seldom know how to love any one with a perfect spiritual love.

They are as yet much inclined to such or such by a natural affection and human friendship; and as they are habituated with regard to things below, so they conceive the like imaginations of the things *of heaven*.

*But the distance is incomparable be-*



ing too curiously of those  
exceed thy knowledge; bu  
ther thy business and ai  
mayest be found, though e  
in the kingdom of God.

And if any one could kn  
the holier or the greater in  
of heaven, what would th  
profit him, unless he shou  
knowledge humble himself  
and rise to the greater ]  
name?

That man is much more  
God who thinketh of the m

humble mind to implore their glorious suffrages, than by a vain inquisitiveness to search into their secrets.

8. They are well and perfectly contented, if men would but be contented, and bridle their vain discourses.

They glory not in their own merits; for they ascribe nothing of goodness to themselves, but all to Me, because I gave all to them out of My infinite charity.

They are filled with so great a love of the Deity, and with joy so overflowing, that there is nothing wanting to their glory, nor can any thing be wanting to their felicity.

All the Saints, the higher they are in glory, the more humble they are in themselves, the nearer to Me, and the more beloved by Me.

And therefore thou hast it written, that they cast down their crowns before God, and fell on their faces before the Lamb, and adored Him that liveth for ever and ever.

9. *Many inquire who is the greater in*

the kingdom of God, who themselves know not whether they shall be worthy to be numbered among the least.

It is a great thing to be even the least in heaven, where all are great; because all shall be called, and shall be, the children of God.

The least shall be as a thousand, and the sinner of a hundred years shall die.

For when the disciples asked who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, they received this answer:

Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little one, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven.

10. Wo to them who disdain to humble themselves willingly with the children; for the lowly gate of the heavenly kingdom will not admit them to enter.

Wo also to the rich, who have their consolation here.

For when the poor enter into the king-



dom of God, they shall stand lamenting without.

Rejoice, ye humble, and be glad, ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God; if, at least, you walk in the truth.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

If we would honour the Saints as they deserve, we should invoke and imitate them, rather than dispute about their degrees of heavenly glory. We should endeavour to copy their bright example; for this is really to honour the Saints, to become Saints like themselves.

God hath formed all the Saints upon the model of His Son, the Word incarnate; so that we cannot become the objects of God's love, if we make not Jesus Christ the object of our imitation. He has willed, said St. Cyprian, that there should be Saints in all states and conditions of life, to make known to all men that each one in his own state may sanctify his soul, and obtain salvation, by living a holy and Christian life. He has constituted Saints for our protectors and our models, that we may gain heaven by walking in their footsteps: they hear our prayers, and, being secure of their own happiness, are solicitous only for ours.

*Let us then endeavour to live and to suffer with them here, that we may live and reign*

with them hereafter; and let us remember that, according to the Gospel, there is but one way of arriving at the happy term which they have reached, which is the way of penance, mortification, and disengagement from the world; every other way leads to perdition.

PRAYER.

THOU desirest, O Lord, our sanctification and our salvation, and thou givest us the most efficacious means of attaining them, but we have hitherto miserably neglected them. "Grant that henceforth we may really honour the Saints by forming ourselves upon their example, and render ourselves worthy of the eternal happiness which they possess, by copying their endeavours to obtain it. Suffer us not to be idle admirers of their felicity, but doers of those good deeds by which they obtained it, that thus we may be assured that ours also shall be the kingdom of heaven. Amen

## CHAPTER LIX.

THAT ALL HOPE AND CONFIDENCE IS TO BE FIXED  
IN GOD ALONE.

LORD, what is my confidence which I have in this life, or what is my greatest solace amongst all the things that appear under heaven ?

Is it not Thou, my Lord God, of whose mercies there is no number ?

Where was it ever well to me without Thee, or when was it ever ill with me when Thou wast present ?

I had rather be poor for Thy sake, than rich without Thee.

I prefer rather to sojourn upon earth with Thee, than to possess heaven without Thee.

Where Thou art, there is heaven ; and there is death and hell, where Thou art not.

Thou art all my desire, and therefore I *must needs sigh after Thee, and cry and pray.*

In short, I cannot fully confide in any one to bring me seasonable help in my necessities, save only in Thee, my God.

Thou art my hope, my confidence, my comforter, and in all things most faithful.

2. All seek the things that are their own; Thou designest only my salvation and profit, and turnest all things to my good.

And although Thou expose me to various temptations and adversities, yet all this Thou ordainest for my good, who art wont to prove Thy beloved servants a thousand ways.

Under which probation Thou oughtest not less to be loved and praised, than if Thou didst replenish me with heavenly consolations.

3. In Thee, therefore, O Lord God, do I place all my hope and refuge; on Thee I cast all my tribulation and anguish; for I find all to be weak and inconstant whatever I behold out of Thee.

For neither will many friends be of service to me, nor can powerful auxiliaries

assist me, nor wise counsellors give me a profitable reply, nor the books of the learned give me consolation, nor any precious substance ransom me, nor any secret place secure me, if Thou Thyself do not assist, help, strengthen, comfort, instruct, and guard me.

4. For all things which seem to be for our peace and for our happiness, when Thou art absent are nothing, and contribute nothing to our felicity.

Thou, therefore, art the fountain of all good, the height of life, and the depth of wisdom; and to trust in Thee above all things is the strongest comfort of Thy servants.

Unto Thee do I lift up mine eyes; in Thee, O my God, Father of mercies, I put my trust.

Bless and sanctify my soul with heavenly benediction, that it may be made Thy holy habitation and the seat of Thy eternal glory; and let nothing be found in the temple of Thy Divinity that may offend the eyes of Thy Majesty.

According to the greatness of Thy goodness and the multitude of Thy tender mercies, look down upon me, and give ear to the prayer of Thy poor servant, a far-distant exile in the region of the shadow of death.

Protect and preserve the soul of Thy poor servant amid so many dangers of this corruptible life, and direct him by Thy accompanying grace, along the path of peace, to the land of perpetual night. Amen.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

WHEN afflicted and loaded with interior troubles, or exterior trials and contradictions, or with all these at the same time, let us confidently have recourse to God, who alone can aid and assist us, and let us say to Him: Lord, Thou knowest the designs of our enemies against our souls; how shall we be able to escape them if Thou assist us not? We raise up our eyes and our hearts towards Thee, who alone art able to protect us; Thou art our God engaged to help us; Thou art our Redeemer, and wilt deliver us; Thou art our Father, and with Thy assistance we shall not yield nor be in danger of perishing.

PRAYER.

THOU hast said, O Lord, that to become Thy disciples we must deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow Thee. Thou knowest our extreme repugnance to both one and the other. Suffer not our faith on this point to condemn us for not practising what we believe to be necessary for salvation, but grant that as we believe, so may we ever live as becometh Christians. Amen.

**Book Fourth.**

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*The Voice of Christ.*

COME to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you, saith the Lord.

The bread that I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world.

Take ye and eat; this is My body, which shall be delivered for you; this do for the commemoration of Me.

He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him.

The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.



## CHAPTER I.

WITH HOW GREAT REVERENCE CHRIST OUGHT TO  
BE RECEIVED.

*The Voice of the Disciple.*

THESE are Thy words, O Christ, the Eternal Truth, though not all uttered at one time, nor written in one place.

Since, therefore, they are Thine, and true, they ought all to be thankfully and faithfully received by me.

They are Thine, and Thou hast spoken them; and they are also mine, because Thou hast delivered them for my salvation.

I willingly receive them from Thy mouth, that they may be the more inseparably ingrafted in my heart.

Words of so great tenderness, so full of sweetness and love, encourage me; but my own sins terrify me, and an unclean conscience driveth me back from receiving so great mysteries.

*The sweetness of Thy words beckoneth*

me onwards; but the multitude of my offences weigheth me down.

2. Thou commandest me to approach to Thee with confidence, if I would have part with Thee; and to receive the food of immortality, if I desire to obtain life and glory everlasting.

Come, sayest Thou, to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.

O sweet and loving word in the ear of a sinner, that Thou, O Lord my God, dost invite the poor and needy to the Communion of Thy most holy Body!

But who am I, O Lord, that I should presume to approach unto Thee?

Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; and Thou sayest, Come ye all to Me.

3. What meaneth this most loving condescension and so friendly invitation?

How shall I dare to approach, who am conscious to myself of no good on which I can presume?

How shall I introduce Thee into my

use, who have too often offended Thy most benign countenance?

The Angels and the Archangels stand reverential awe; the Saints and the just are afraid; and Thou sayest, Come, all to Me.

Unless Thou, O Lord, didst say this, who could believe it to be true?

And unless Thou didst command it, who would venture to approach?

4. Behold, Noe, a just man, laboured a hundred years in building the ark, that with a few he might be saved: and how, then, shall I be able in the space of one hour to prepare myself to receive with reverence the Maker of the world?

Moses, Thy great servant and Thy special friend, made an Ark of incorruptible wood, which also he covered with most pure gold, that he might deposit therein the tables of the law: and I, a corrupted creature, shall I presume so easily to receive Thee, the Maker of the world and the Giver of life?

Solomon, the wisest of the kings of

Israel, employed seven years in building a magnificent temple for the praise Thy Name, and for eight days he celebrated the feast of the dedication; then he offered a thousand peace-making times, and brought in a solemn march the ark of the covenant into the city prepared for it, with sound of trumpet and rejoicing: and I, unhappy, and vilest of men, how shall I introduce thee into my house, who can hardly spend half-hour devoutly? And would thou had ever even once spent one half-hour I ought!

5. O my God, how much did they deavour to do to please Thee! Alas, little is it that I do! How short a time do I spend when I prepare myself to communicate!

Seldom am I wholly collected, seldom free from all distraction.

And yet, surely, in the life-giving presence of Thy Deity, no unbecoming thought should occur, nor any thing created occur to my mind; for it is not an Angel, but

Lord of the Angels whom I am about to entertain.

6. There is, moreover, a very great difference between the Ark of the Covenant, with its relics, and Thy most pure Body, with its unspeakable virtues; between those sacrifices of the law, which were figures of things to come, and the true Sacrifice of Thy Body, which is the accomplishment of all ancient sacrifices.

7. Why, then, am I not more inflamed in seeking Thy adorable presence?

Why do I not prepare myself with greater solicitude to receive Thy sacred gifts, seeing that those ancient holy Patriarchs and Prophets, yea kings also and princes, with the whole people, manifested so great affection of devotion towards Thy divine worship?

8. The most devout king David danced with all his might before the Ark of God, as he called to mind the benefits in times past bestowed upon his fathers: he made *musical instruments* of various kinds; he *composed psalms*, and appointed them to

he sung with joy, and he himself likewise often sung them upon his harp, inspired with the grace of the Holy Ghost; he taught the people of Israel to praise God with their whole heart, and with one harmonious voice to bless and praise Him every day.

If so great devotion was then displayed and such a memorial of the praise of God made in presence of the Ark of the Covenant, how great a reverence and devotion now ought I and all Christian people to have in presence of this Sacrament, and in receiving the most precious Body of Christ.

9. Many run to sundry places to visit the relics of the Saints, and wonder to hear of their remarkable deeds; they behold the spacious buildings of their churches, and kiss their sacred bones, enveloped in silk and gold:

And behold, Thou art here present to me on the altar, my God, the Saint of Saints, the Creator of men, and the Lord of Angels.

Oftentimes in seeing those things men


moved with curiosity and the novelty sights, and carry home but little fruit amendment; and the more so when sons lightly run hither and thither without real contrition.

but here, in the Sacrament of the altar, Thou art wholly present, my God, the true Christ Jesus; where also is derived, full copiousness, the fruit of eternal salvation, as often as Thou art worthily devoutly received.

To this, indeed, we are not drawn by levity, curiosity, or sensuality, but by a firm faith, a devout hope, and a pure charity.

O. O God, unseen Creator of the world, how wonderfully dost Thou deal with us; how sweetly and graciously dost Thou do all things for Thy elect, to whom Thou offerest Thyself to be received in this Sacrament!

For this exceedeth all understanding; in a particular manner draweth the heart of *the devout*, and enkindleth their



11. Oh, the wonderful and h  
of the Sacrament, which only  
of Christ know, but which unbe  
such as are slaves to sin, car  
ence !

In this Sacrament is conferr  
grace ; virtue lost is again rest  
soul ; and beauty disfigured by  
eth again.

So great sometimes is this  
from the fulness of the devotio  
not only the mind, but the fra  
feebleth an increase of strengt



For He is our sanctification and our redemption; He is the consolation of pilgrims, and the eternal fruition of the Saints.

Greatly to be lamented, therefore, is it, that many take so little heed of this saving Mystery, which rejoiceth Heaven, and preserveth the whole world.

Oh, blindness and hardness of the heart of man, that doth not more regard so unspeakable a gift, and even from a daily use of it falleth into a disregard of it!

13. For if this most holy Sacrament were celebrated in one place only, and consecrated by only one Priest in the world, with how great a desire, thinkest thou, would men be affected towards that place, and to such a Priest of God, that they might see the Divine Mysteries celebrated?

But now that there are many Priests, and Christ is offered up in many places, that the grace and love of God to man may appear so much the greater, by how much the more bounteously is this sacred

Communion distributed throughout the entire world.

Thanks be to Thee, O good Jesu, eternal Shepherd, who hast vouchsafed to feed us poor exiles with Thy precious Body and Blood, and to invite us to the receiving these mysteries, even by an address from Thy own mouth, saying, Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

Who can conceive or explain the excellence of the all-divine gift which Jesus Christ bestows upon us in giving us His blessed Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist, in which we receive God with all His perfections, the plenitude of His divinity, all the virtues and grace of His humanity, and all the merits of a Man-God? We may say, with St. Augustin, that God, though all-powerful, cannot bestow upon us any thing greater than Himself, whom He here gives us; though most rich and liberal, yet He cannot dispense to us any thing more from the treasures of His bounty than this one gift of His Body and Blood, His whole self; and though the uncreated and incarnate Wisdom of the Father, yet He cannot invent a more efficacious means of gaining

r hearts than to enter into them by the Holy Communion, and thus unite and transform us into himself.

But what should delight our minds and hearts that in the sacred Host which we receive, and even in its smallest part (that we may lose nothing of so precious a gift) He has included the riches of His bounty, wisdom, and love, communicate them all to us, and by communicating them to us, to enable us to live in a supernatural and divine life by feeding and enriching us with God; for it is to this end that He assumes a new life upon our altars, to impart it to us in the Holy Communion, by which, as the Council of Trent, He infuses into our souls all the riches of His love. Yes, my Saviour, after having bestowed upon us all the goods of nature and of grace, Thou addest still more Thy gifts—Thy whole self in the blessed Sacrament. After having been liberal of Thy gifts in our regard, which, although most precious, are still much less than Thyself, in this adorable Sacrament Thou art prodigal even of Thy very self. Who then can refuse and withhold his heart from God, who comes thus to take possession of it, as belonging to Him upon so many titles?

**PRAYER.**

*What return can I make Thee, O Lord, for*

all Thy gifts and favours! What can I give Thee in exchange for Thyself, whom Thou bestowest upon my soul, to become to me the principle of a truly Christian life, and the pledge of my salvation! As often as I have the sacred honour of receiving Thee, my most amiable Saviour, I may say that Thou art all mine, and yet, alas! after having received Thee so frequently, I cannot as yet say that I am all thine. Come, O Jesus, and take full possession of my ungrateful and unfaithful heart, which is so little devoted to Thee, and so much given to the world and to itself. Conquer its perversity, O Lord, and oblige it to love Thee, that it may hate itself, and, recalling its affections, devote them entirely to Thee. It is thine, O God, as the work of Thy hands and the price of Thy blood; it is Thy purchased inheritance, which Thou comest to take possession of. Permit it not to depart from Thee to become the slave of its passions, but, being come to me, establish Thy reign entirely and for ever over me.

Suffer me not, O Jesus, when I receive Thee, who art my all, both now and for ever, to be so unhappy, like many Christians, as to be Thine only in appearance and exteriorly, only in desires and wishes, or to be but half Thine, so as to wish to reconcile God and the world, vanity and devotion; which thou declarest in the Gospel is

impossible and incompatible with salvation. Suffer me not to be so miserable as to belong to Thee only for a time, by almost immediately after Communion falling again into voluntary habitual faults, which Thy presence should correct, or at least diminish; for the fruit of a good Communion is strength, courage, and constancy to resist and conquer ourselves.

Receive, O Jesus, my most humble thanks for Thy institution of this adorable Sacrament, in which Thy love triumphs over all Thy other attributes, to feed and nourish me with Thy own Body and Blood. In gratitude for so great a favour, for so wonderful and divine a benefit, I beseech Thee to accept of the sincere, perfect, and irrevocable offering which I now make of my whole self to Thee, for time and eternity. Amen.

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## CHAPTER II.

THAT THE GREAT GOODNESS AND LOVE OF GOD ARE  
SHEWN TO MAN IN THIS SACRAMENT.

*The Voice of the Disciple.*

CONFIDING, O Lord, in Thy goodness, and  
in Thy great mercy, I come sick to my  
Saviour, hungry and thirsty to the Foun-

tain of life, needy to the King of heaven, a servant to my Lord, a creature to my Creator, and one in desolation to my loving Comforter.

But whence is this to me, that Thou shouldst come to me? who am I, that Thou shouldst give to me Thyself?

How dare a sinner appear before Thee! and how dost Thou vouchsafe to come to a sinner?

Thou knowest Thy servant, and dost know that he has nothing of good in himself, wherefore Thou shouldst bestow this upon him.

I confess, therefore, my unworthiness; I acknowledge thy bounty; I praise Thy goodness; and I give Thee thanks for Thy exceeding love.

For it is for Thy own sake Thou dost this, not on account of my merits; that Thy goodness may be the more manifest to me, that Thy love may be more abundantly imparted, and Thy humility more perfectly commended.

Since, therefore, this pleaseth Thee, and

Thou hast ordained it thus, Thy merciful condescension pleaseth me also; and oh, that my iniquity may be no obstacle!

2. O most sweet and most benign Jesu, how great reverence and thanksgiving, with perpetual praise, are due to Thee for the receiving of Thy sacred Body, whose dignity no man can be found able to unfold!

But on what shall I think in this Communion, when I approach to my Lord, whom I can never duly venerate, and yet desire to receive with devotion?

What can I think on better or more salutary than to humble myself entirely before Thee, and extol Thy infinite goodness above me?

I praise Thee, O my God, and I extol Thee for ever; I despise myself, and cast myself down into the depth of my own vileness.

3. Behold, Thou art the Saint of Saints, *and I am the scum of sinners.*

*Behold, Thou bowest Thyself down to*

me, who am not worthy to look up to Thee.

Behold, Thou comest to me; Thou wishest to be with me; Thou invitest me to Thy banquet; Thou desirest to give me heavenly food, even the bread of Angels, to eat; no other, indeed, than Thyself, the living Bread, who didst come down from heaven, and givest life to the world.

4. Behold, whence love proceedeth; what a condescension shineth forth! how great thanksgiving and praise are due to Thee for these!

Oh, how salutary and profitable was Thy design when Thou didst institute it! how sweet and delightful this banquet, wherein Thou hast given Thyself for our food!

Oh, how admirable is Thy work, O Lord! how mighty is Thy power! how infallible Thy truth!

For Thou hast spoken, and all things were made, and that which Thou commandest has been done.



5. A wonderful thing it is, and worthy of faith, and transcending all human intelligence, that Thou, O Lord my God, true God and man, art contained entire under a small form of bread and wine, art eaten by the receiver, and without being consumed.

Thou, the Lord of all things, who standest in need of no one, art pleased by this Sacrament to dwell in us.

Preserve my heart and my body immaculate, that, with a joyful and pure conscience, I may often be able to celebrate Thy sacred Mysteries, and receive for my eternal salvation what Thou hast principally ordained and instituted for Thy honour and perpetual remembrance.

6. Rejoice, O my soul, and give thanks unto God for so noble a gift, and so singular a solace left to thee in this valley of tears.

For as often as thou repeatest this *Mystery and receivest* the Body of Christ, *o often dost thou perform the work of*

thy redemption, and art made partaker of all the merits of Christ.

For the charity of Christ is never diminished, and the greatness of His propitiation is never exhausted.

Therefore oughtest thou to dispose thyself for this by an ever-recurring renovation of spirit, and weigh with attentive consideration the great mystery of salvation.


And as often as thou celebratest or hearest Mass, it ought to seem to thee as great, new, and delightful, as if Christ that very day first descending into the Virgin's womb was made man; or hanging on the Cross, suffered and died for man's salvation.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

I. WHEN thou approachest the Holy Communion, consider the greatness and majesty of God, whom thou art going to receive, and the baseness and unworthiness of thyself, a vile and sinful creature, who art about to receive Him. Humble thyself in His presence, and say to Him. Who am I, Lord, that I should dare to approach

Thee; and who art Thou, that Thou shouldst debase Thyself so low as to come to me! When I consider, on the one hand, the excellence of Thy sanctity and purity, and, on the other, the corruption and disorders of my soul, I am forced to acknowledge that I am most unworthy to receive Thee, and that I cannot, without rashness, permit Thee to enter into my heart. But, knowing the excess of Thy goodness, and the need which I have of Thee for my sanctification and salvation, I will approach to Thee, my Saviour, with a holy confidence, for Thou hast said that those who are well stand not in need of a physician, but only those who are sick; to Thee, who comest to seek and to save those who are gone astray, and are in danger of perishing; to Thee who art the "Word made flesh for love of man;" to Thee whose desire is that we be converted and live. I am indeed a grievous sinner, but I will no longer remain such. I feel neither consolation nor delight in Thy holy presence, but, sensible of my many miseries, I come to lay them all at Thy sacred feet; here I will rest.

II. Whence comes this honour and this happiness, that my God should so far conceal His sovereign majesty as to become the food and nourishment of my soul? Ah! it is the profound *humility of a Man-God*, who would carry *his abjection not only so far as not to appear as*



may not be dazzled by their gl  
disclose to us the depth of Thy  
we may be induced to copy it  
O my soul, canst Thou desire t  
others, when Thou beholdest Thy  
and hidden in the Holy Euchar  
such a miserable worm of the ear  
to exalt myself, when I reflect th  
nihilates Himself in this Myst  
upon me the character of His hu

III. Say not, Christian soul,  
not dare to approach frequentl  
great and awful. Thou art in  
and thou wilt not cease to be  
not endeavour to attend diligentl  
tion : but, says St. Augustin. this

approach to the Holy Table. It is not for thee to know this increase; but there is always advancement when thou dost strive with greater earnestness to become more holy by means of recollection and humility.

#### PRAYER BEFORE COMMUNION.

I BELIEVE, O Lord, that Thou art my God, and the Sovereign Judge who will decide my eternal doom. With what respect, therefore, ought I to approach Thee! Alas! who am I, that I should dare even so much as to lift up my eyes towards Thee! How then shall I dare to receive Thee into my heart, which is so miserable, so corrupt, and so unworthy of Thee! Supply, O Lord, my great unworthiness by the excess of Thy merciful goodness, which does not suppose, but constitutes the merit of Thy creatures.

O infinite greatness! O sovereign majesty! O immensity of my God, concealed and annihilated in the sacred Host which I am going to receive! to Thee do I give all glory, and to myself all possible contempt, which alone is my due. Come, O Jesus, come and fill my empty and depraved heart with the plenitude of Thy love. Come, and do Thou take place of self within me, and raise me, who am poor, from the dust and from nothing, and elevate me to the possession of Thy love. But am I nothing? I am worse, I am a sinner, and deserve hell. Ah! I would

willingly say, with St. Peter, *Depart from me Lord*; but fearing lest Thou shouldst say to as Thou didst say to him, that I shall have part in Thy glory, if I do not honour Thy militancy, I consent to Thy being born in my although a thousand times poorer than the that henceforth I may live only by and for Thee. Amen.

### CHAPTER III.

THAT IT IS PROFITABLE TO COMMUNICATE OF.

*The Voice of the Disciple.*

BEHOLD, I come to Thee, O Lord, through Thy gift, it may be well with me, that I may be delighted in Thy holy banquet, which Thou, O God, hast prepared in sweetness for the poor.

Behold, in Thee is all that I can ought to desire; Thou art my salvation and redemption, my hope and my strength, my honour and my glory.

Make, therefore, the soul of Thy servant joyful this day, because unto Thee, O Lord Jesus, have I lifted up my

Now do I desire to receive Thee devoutly and reverently; I long to bring Thee into my house, so that, with Zacheus, I may deserve to be blessed by Thee, and to be numbered amongst the children of Abraham.

My soul longeth eagerly after Thy Body; my heart desireth to be united with Thee.

2. Give thyself to me, and it is enough; for without Thee no comfort is of any avail.

Without Thee I cannot exist; and without Thy visitation I am unable to live.

Therefore must I often come to Thee, and receive Thee as the medicine of my salvation, lest perhaps I faint in the way, should I be deprived of this heavenly food.

For so Thou, O most merciful Jesus, when Thou hadst been preaching to the people and curing their various maladies, didst once say, I will not send them *fasting to their home*, lest they faint on the way.

shall be partaker and heir of  
glory.

Necessary, indeed, is it for  
often fall and commit sin, so  
torpid and faint, that by frequent  
and confessions, and by the  
ing of Thy Body, I may again  
cleansed, and inflamed, lest  
longer abstaining, I fall away  
holy purpose.

3. For prone are the senses  
evil from his youth; and unto  
medicine succour him. he is



celebrate,\* what would it be if I did not take this remedy, and did not seek so great a help?


And although I am not every day prepared, nor well disposed to celebrate, yet I will endeavour at certain times to receive the divine Mysteries, and to make myself partaker of so great a grace.

For this is the one chief consolation of a faithful soul, so long as she sojourneth far off from Thee in this mortal body, that, mindful of her God, she receives her Beloved with a devout mind.

4. O wonderful condescension of Thy affection towards us! that Thou, O Lord God, the Creator and Giver of life to all spirits, shouldst vouchsafe to come to a poor soul, and with Thy whole divinity and humanity to feast her hunger with satness.

O happy mind and blessed soul! which deserveth to receive Thee, her Lord God,

\* It will be observed that portions of this chapter are applicable only to priests.



into her house, how sweet  
doth she receive, how faith  
doth she welcome, how l  
noble a Spouse doth she en  
loved above all beloved, an  
that can be desired.

Let heaven and earth, O m  
Beloved, with all their att  
before Thy face ; for whatev  
beauty they possess, all is th  
bounty, nor can they attain  
of Thy Name, whose wisdom  
numbers.

proaching to Him, and are induced to receive Him in the Holy Communion only through obedience, and not by the ardour of our desires. For how can we know Thee, O Jesus, and not love Thee, and how can we love Thee and not desire to receive Thee, and to be transformed into Thee, by worthily and frequently receiving Thee in the Holy Communion? And yet, O God, how often does insensibility towards Thee desolate my soul, and would discourage me, were I not assured that, although I am deficient of that love which I desire to have for Thee, which I cannot acquire of myself, but which I ask of Thee, Thou wouldst still have me receive Thee through obedience and with humility. What, O God, would become of me, in the dryness which I experience, were I not assured that the great miseries of my soul draw down Thy mercies upon me, and that Thy delight is to dwell in a heart which, conscious of its own unworthiness, does all in its power to prepare itself for Thee? In truth, the humble acknowledgment of our unworthiness, after a confession the most entire of which a Christian is capable, supplies the place of ardent desires for the Holy Communion; and we cannot either honour or please God more than by debasing ourselves for His love before His *sacred majesty*. We should not therefore *betain from the Holy Communion*, because we

feel no devotion nor any desire of approaching; but we should communicate as often as a wise and discreet director advises us, and receive Jesus Christ in obedience to him at whose voice Jesus Himself descends upon the altar.

Is there any thing more easy or more consoling, than to reflect, when we are preparing ourselves in the best manner we are able for the Holy Communion, that Jesus Christ has said that those who are well need not a physician, but only such as are sick.

#### PRAYER FOR A GOOD COMMUNION.

O Jesus! it is with full confidence in those words which Thou speakest to me, and which I have just read, that I prepare myself to receive Thee, not because I deserve such a favour, but because I have need of Thee, and my soul cannot live without Thee. It is afflicted with many maladies and infirmities which Thou alone, its sovereign and charitable physician, canst heal. Come, then, my Saviour, and apply a remedy to my wounds, heal the pride of my heart with Thy humility, and consume all self-love with the fire of Thy divine charity. Come and invest me with Thy strength, that I may conquer my passions; animate me with Thy spirit, that I may seek only to please Thee, and live that supernatural and divine life which is characteristic of

the life which Thou livest, and which Thou bringest to me in the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Amen.

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## CHAPTER IV.

THAT MANY BENEFITS ARE BESTOWED ON THOSE  
WHO COMMUNICATE DEVOUTLY.

*The Voice of the Disciple.*

O LORD my God, prevent Thy servant with the blessings of Thy sweetness, that I may deserve to approach worthily and devoutly to Thy magnificent Sacrament.

Raise up my heart towards Thee, and deliver me from oppressive slothfulness.

Visit me with Thy saving mercy, that I may taste in spirit Thy sweetness, which plentifully lieth hid in this Sacrament as in a fountain.

Illuminate also my eyes, to behold so great a Mystery, and strengthen me to believe it with an undoubting faith.

For it is Thy work, and not man's power; Thy sacred institution, not the invention of man.

For no one can be found capable of himself to conceive and understand these things, which transcend even the intelligence of the Angels.

What, then, of so high and sacred a mystery shall I, an unworthy sinner, who am but earth and ashes, be able to investigate or comprehend?

2. O Lord, in the simplicity of my heart, with a good and firm faith, and at Thy command, I come to Thee with hope and reverence; and I believe truly that Thou art here present in the Sacrament, both God and Man.

Thou wilt, then, that I receive Thee, and unite myself to Thee in charity.

Wherefore, I beseech Thy clemency, and I beg of Thee to give me a special grace, that I may be wholly dissolved in Thee, and overflow with Thy love, and no more concern myself about any other kind of consolation.

For this most high and most worthy Sacrament is the health of soul and body, the medicine of every spiritual malady; in which my vices are cured, my passions restrained, temptations overcome or lessened, greater grace infused, incipient virtue increased, faith confirmed, hope strengthened, and charity inflamed and enlarged.

3. For Thou hast bestowed, and still oftentimes dost bestow, many good things in this Sacrament to Thy beloved who communicate devoutly, O my God, the support of my soul, the repairer of human infirmity, and the giver of all interior consolation.

For Thou impartest unto them much consolation against their various tribulations, and Thou liftest them up from the depth of their own dejection to the hope of Thy protection, and Thou dost interiorly recreate and enlighten them with a certain new grace; so that they who first were *anxious, and without sensible affection before Communion*, after being refreshed

with this heavenly food and drink find themselves changed for the better.

And in such a way Thou art pleased to deal with Thy elect, that they may more truly acknowledge and plainly experience how great is their weakness when left to themselves, and how much of bounty and grace they receive from Thee.

For of themselves they are cold, dry, and indevout; but by Thee they deserve to become fervent, cheerful, and devout.

For who, humbly approaching to the fountain of sweetness, doth not carry thence some little sweetness?

Or who, standing by a copious fire, doth not derive therefrom some little heat?

And Thou art a fountain ever full and overflowing; Thou art a fire always burning and never failing.

4. Wherefore, if I may not draw out of the fulness of the fountain, nor drink to satiety, I will at least set my mouth to the orifice of this heavenly pipe, that so I may draw thence some little drop to



ay my thirst, and may not wholly ther away.

And if as yet I cannot be all heavenly  
I all on fire, like the Cherubim and  
raphim, I will still endeavour to follow  
er devotion, and prepare my heart,  
it so I may acquire some small spark  
divine fire by humbly receiving this  
-giving Sacrament.

And whatever is wanting to me, O good  
su, most holy Saviour, do Thou in Thy  
anty and goodness supply for me, who  
it vouchsafed to call all unto Thee,  
ring, Come to Me, all you that labour  
I are burdened, and I will refresh  
1.

5. I labour, indeed, in the sweat of my  
ow, I am tortured with grief of heart,  
m burdened with sins, I am troubled  
h temptations, I am entangled and op-  
ssed with many evil passions; and  
re is no one to help me, no one to de-  
ar and save me, but Thou, O Lord  
d, *my Saviour*, to whom I commit  
*elf and all that is mine*, that Thou

mayest keep me, and bring me to everlasting life.

Receive me, for the praise and glory of Thy Name, who hast prepared Thy Body and Blood for my food and drink.

Grant, O Lord God my salvation, that with the frequenting of this Thy Mystery may increase the affection of my devotion.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

*Ask of Jesus Christ a lively faith in His real presence, and an ardent love for Him, in the most holy Sacrament of the altar.*

I BELIEVE, O Lord, that Thou art present, both body and soul, in the adorable Sacrament which I am about to receive. Thou wilt there make me partaker of the merits of Thy blessed humanity, and wilt inebriate me with the plenitude of Thy divinity. Change then, O Lord, change the indifference of my heart into an ardent desire of loving Thee, of pleasing and possessing Thee. Permit me not to regard or to receive Thee with coldness, who comest to inflame my heart with the fire of Thy love. Supply in me whatever is wanting of faith in a mystery so incomprehensible to all human understanding; enliven me with a lively sense of Thy

essence, and grant that my heart may receive thee as its God with reverence, as its Saviour with confidence, and as its Father with love. Is it possible, my soul, that, surrounded and replenished with all the ardour of God's love to thee, thou shouldst still remain all ice in the midst of so much fire! Alas! O Jesus! how unworthy am I to feel so much eagerness to possess myself, and so much indifference about losing Thee! *Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst heal me*; say then to me, as Thou didst say to the leper: *I will*—be thou healed of thy tepidity and insensibility.

PRAYER.

Thee do I address myself, O my most dear Saviour, that I may obtain fervour and joy in Thy love. Thou knowest that, full of selfishness and of self-love, I am most unworthy and incapable of Thy love; but I beseech Thee, the Father of my heart, to inspire me to copy Thy will, to follow Thy inclinations, and to rely on Thy merits; instil into my soul Thy meekness, humility, and patience, that so I may be animated with Thy spirit, and live by Thee. Amen.

## CHAPTER V.

ON THE DIGNITY OF THE SACRAMENT, AND OF THE  
PRIESTLY STATE.*The Voice of the Beloved.*

IF thou hadst the purity of an Angel, and the sanctity of St. John the Baptist, thou wouldst neither be worthy to receive nor to handle this Sacrament.

For this is not due to man's merits, that a man should consecrate and handle the Sacrament of Christ; and receive for food the bread of Angels.

Great is the Mystery, and great the dignity of Priests, to whom it is given that which to the Angels is not granted.

For Priests alone, rightly ordained in the Church, have the power of celebrating and consecrating the Body of Christ.

A Priest, indeed, is the minister of God, using the word of God, by the command and institution of God; but God is there the principle author and invisible worker, to whom all whatsoever

he willeth is subject, and all whatsoever he commandeth is obedient.

More oughtest thou, therefore, to credit God the Omnipotent, in this most excellent Sacrament, than thy own sense or any visible sign. And therefore thou oughtest to approach this work with fear and reverence.

Take heed to thyself, and see what kind of ministry has been delivered to thee by the imposition of the hands of the Bishop. Behold, thou art made a Priest, and art consecrated to celebrate; see now that thou do so faithfully and devoutly, in due time, thou offer up Sacrifice to God, and that thou show thyself blameless.

Thou hast not lightened thy burden, but art now bound by a stricter bond of discipline, and art obliged to greater perfection of sanctity.

A Priest ought to be adorned with all virtues, and to set the example of a good life to others.

*His conversation should not be with popular and common ways of men,*

but with the Angels in heaven, or with perfect men upon earth.

3. A Priest, clad in sacred vestments is Christ's vicerent, that he may suppliantly and humbly pray to God for himself and all the people.

He hath before and behind him the sign of the Cross of our Lord, that he may ever remember the Passion of Christ.

Before him he beareth the Cross on the chasuble, that he may diligently behold the footsteps of Christ, and fervently endeavour to follow after them.

Behind him he is marked with the Cross, that he may mildly suffer for God's sake whatsoever adversities befall him from others.

He weareth the Cross before, that he may bewail his own sins; and behind that through compassion he may lament the sins of others, and know that he is placed in the midst, between God and the sinner.

Neither ought he to grow weary

prayer and the holy Oblation, until he deserve to obtain grace and mercy.

When a Priest celebrateth, he honour-  
th God, he rejoiceth the Angels, he  
difeth the Church, he helpeth the living,  
e obtaineth rest for the departed, and  
taketh himself partaker of all good  
things.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

*If the holy dispositions with which the Priest  
should celebrate Mass, and with which a Chris-  
tian should assist at it, in order to hear it with  
advantage.*

THE Priest, by his ordination, has received the  
power of consecration, so that, according to St.  
Augustin, God as it were becomes again incar-  
nate, and takes upon Himself a new life, in the  
hands of the Priest by virtue of his word. It is  
his power which, in some sense, makes him  
superior to the Angels, and exalts him in dignity  
above all other creatures.

Such being thy exalted dignity, O Priest of  
the Lord, how great must thy obligations be!  
Thy endeavour should be to cherish within thee,  
throughout the day, the same dispositions with  
which thou shouldst approach the altar. Keep  
thyself closely united to God, recollected in His

to His glory, and the salvation of

When thou celebratest this adorable  
endeavour, first, to effect within thee  
what Jesus accomplishes upon the  
ble thyself most profoundly, and  
self and thy petitions to God. Thy  
sacrifice of thy soul to that of  
Blood of Christ; enter into His  
dispositions; as the minister of  
which He offers to His eternal  
means, for the salvation of men; thy  
victim of love for that God, who He  
the victim of His love for thee. Con-  
own, and become entirely His, as  
entirely thine upon the altar, that  
sacramentally in thy heart, and co-



re, exclaims St. Chrysostom, should that hand which immolates the Body of the Word incarnate! how spotless that tongue which is purified with the Blood of Jesus! and how clean at heart into which the infinite purity of a man-God is received together with all His other tributes!

Reflect then, O Priest of the Lord, that Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, celebrates Mass in thy person, and that as thou art invested with this power to consecrate upon the altar, so thou couldst also be animated with His spirit, and conform thy life to His divine example. When thou dost pronounce the words of consecration, give thy all, thy heart, and thy whole self, together with the sacred words which thou utterest. Whilst thou art putting on thy vestments, meditate on the mysteries of Christ's Passion, which they represent, and beg pardon for thy sins, which were the cause of all His sufferings. When going to the altar, reflect that thou art accompanying Jesus Christ in spirit to Calvary, and that thou art going to behold Him, with the eyes of faith, mystically die by thy hands. At the foot of the altar, ask pardon for thy sins and for those of all the faithful, whose place thou holdest as their agent and mediator. At the *Gloria in Excelsis*, beseech God to bestow upon thee, and upon all who assist at the Sacrifice, an efficacious will to be saved.

At the *Epistle*, conceive a holy desire Christ may be born on the altar, as souls of all: such a desire as the Prophets for the coming of the Messiah, and the to establish Jesus Christ in the hearts of mankind.

At the *Gospel*, enliven thy faith and thy zeal: thy faith, to believe and to the Gospel, and thy zeal, to instil its into others.

At the *Credo*, beseech the Lord that may be conformable to thy faith.

At the *Offertory*, offer the Sacrifice of Mass to the honour of God, in thanks for His blessings, in atonement for thy sins, all those virtues necessary for salvation, the relief and consolation of the souls in purgatory.

At the *Canon*, transport thyself in spirit to heaven; and endeavour there to enter into the dispositions of the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles, that through thee He may descend again upon the altar, and in the hearts of the faithful.

At the *Consecration*, let all yield to Christ as He comes upon the altar at thy word, and to Himself as it were a new life.

Join thyself to His intentions, present His merits, immolate thy whole self to Him, and, overflowing with His love, pre-

His eternal Father for the living and for the dead.

At the *Pater Noster*, enter into sentiments of perfect confidence in Jesus Christ.

At the dividing of the Host, which mystically represents the death of Jesus Christ, beseech Him to assist thee in perfectly dying to thyself, in giving thy whole heart and affections to Him, and to bring thee to a holy life, and a good death.

At the *Communion*, renew thy faith in the God whom thou receivest, thy confidence in thy Saviour, and thy love for thy Father, who comes to take possession of thy heart, and to give thee Himself as thy inheritance. Say to Him with thy whole soul and all thy powers: Be Thou the God of my heart, and my portion for ever.

After the *Communion*, return thanks to Jesus Christ for having given Himself entirely to thee, and beseech Him that nothing may any more separate thee from Him.

In a word, let both Priests and people, after having celebrated or after having heard Mass, endeavour, by a life of separation from the vanities and pleasures of the world, by mortifying their passions, and by wholly applying themselves to their duties, to make themselves, as St. Augustin says, the one, Priests of the Lord according to the spirit, and His victims according to the flesh; the other, Priests, not in character

and in power, but in intention, by entering into the views of Jesus Christ upon the altar. Remember how the pagans returned from Calvary, penetrated with a lively faith in Jesus Christ, overwhelmed with sorrow for their sins, and truly changed and converted; and reflect how much more you ought, after having celebrated Mass, which is the same Sacrifice as that of Calvary, or, after having heard it, to be filled with contrition for your offences, and resolved to live henceforth by faith and by hope, and as victims of the love of Christ Jesus our Lord.

PRAYER,

*To obtain from God the grace of saying and of hearing Mass well.*

O LORD, who in the adorable Sacrifice of the Mass art Thyself both Priest and Victim, immolating Thyself, by the Priest's ministry, to the justice of Thy Father for the salvation of men, grant that we may sacrifice our hearts in union with the Sacrifice of Thy Body and Blood, and, endeavouring to produce in our souls the same that Thou effectest upon the altar, employ ourselves, during the holy Mass, in the exercises of profound humility and prayer, and offer ourselves as victims for Thy people in and by Thee.

We offer up this adorable Sacrifice, which is the same as that of Calvary, to Thy honour and glory, in thanksgiving for all Thy benefits, to

in the virtues necessary for salvation, and to  
; down Thy mercy upon us in the forgive-  
of our manifold offences. Grant, O Jesus,  
the sacramental life which Thou assumest  
the altar may become for us, by real or spirit-  
-ommunion, the source of a new life. As  
I takest place of the substances of bread  
wine, by their destruction, so do Thou take  
; of our self-love in our hearts, and, destroy-  
all that is estranged from Thee, establish  
love in place of our self-love, and let every  
; give way to Thee.

adorable Victim of our salvation and love !  
hou makest choice of our hearts for the con-  
nation of Thy sacramental life, be pleased  
complete in us the sacrifice of self, which  
d separate us from Thee ; suffer us not,  
st we feed upon the Lamb of God, to live  
as men, but enable us to imitate Thee in the  
tice of those virtues which in the Holy  
munion Thou comest to imprint in our  
l. Amen.

## CHAPTER VI.

A SELF-INTERROGATION CONCERNING THE MIRROR  
PROPER BEFORE COMMUNION.

*The Voice of the Disciple.*

WHEN I consider Thy dignity, O Lord, and my own vileness, I am affrighted exceedingly, and am confounded within myself.

For if I do not appeal to Thee, I fly from life; and if I intrude myself unworthily, I incur Thy displeasure.

What, then, shall I do, O my God, my Helper and Counsellor in necessities?

2. Do Thou teach me the right way; set before me some short exercise suitable for the Holy Communion.

For it is well to know after what manner, indeed, I ought devoutly and reverently to prepare my heart for Thee, for the profitable receiving of Thy Sacrament, as well as for celebrating so great and divine a Sacrifice.

## PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

ONE of the best dispositions for worthily receiving the Holy Communion, is to be resolved that Jesus shall reign for ever the God of our hearts, that is, that we will obey Him in all things, and refuse Him nothing that He demands of us, for it is in quality of King that He comes to, and as the King of all bounty; He comes into our souls to be again born there, and to reign over our passions and affections.

## PRAYER.

Yes, my Saviour, when I communicate, I indeed make Thee the Master, the King, and the God of my heart; I then protest sincerely that I am entirely Thine; but, after receiving Thee, I become again the slave of my own humour, and shaking off the sweet yoke of Thy empire, I subject myself to the servitude of concupiscence. At the time of Communion, I am all Thine, but soon, alas! do I again become wholly devoted to myself. What an injustice to Thy dominion! What an outrage on Thy bounty! thus to rob Thee of a heart which upon so many titles belongs only to Thee! No, I will never again withdraw myself from the empire of Thy love: secure to Thyself Thy own conquest, and suffer me not to *escape from Thee, or ever more to be separated from Thee. Amen.*

## CHAPTER VII.

OF THE EXAMINATION OF OUR OWN CONSCIENCE, AND  
OF A RESOLUTION OF AMENDMENT.

*The Voice of the Beloved.*

ABOVE all things, it behooveth the Priest of God to come to the celebrating, handling, and receiving this Sacrament with the greatest humility of heart and lowly reverence; with a full faith, and a pious intention for the honour of God.

Examine diligently thy conscience, and to the best of thy power cleanse and purify it by true contrition and humble confession; so that thou neither have nor know of any thing weighty, which may give thee remorse, and hinder thy free access.

Hold in displeasure all thy sins in general, and for thy daily excesses more especially grieve and lament.

And if time admit, confess to God, in the secrecy of thy heart, all the miseries of thy passions.



2. Sigh and grieve that thou art still  
carnal and worldly, so unmortified  
on thy passions.

So full of the motions of concupiscence ;  
unguarded in thy outward senses ; so  
ten entangled with many vain imagina-  
ons.

So much inclined to things exterior ; so  
gligent of the interior.

So prone to laughter and dissipation ; so  
rd to tears and compunction.

So inclined to relaxation, and to the  
asures of the flesh ; so sluggish to au-  
rity and fervour.

So curious to hear news and to see fine  
ings ; so remiss to embrace humiliation  
d abjection.

So covetous to possess much ; so sparing  
giving, so close in retaining.

So inconsiderate in talking ; so unob-  
rvant of silence.

So disordered in thy manners ; so over-  
ger in thy actions.

*So immoderate in food ; so deaf to the  
rd of God.*

So ready for repose; so slow to labour.

So wakeful to hear idle tales; so drowsy at the sacred vigils.

So hasty to finish thy devotions; so wandering in attention.

So negligent in reciting the hours; so tepid in celebrating; so dry in communicating.

So quickly distracted; so seldom fully recollected.

So suddenly moved to anger; so apt to take offence at others.

So prone to judge; so severe in reprehending.

So joyful in prosperity; so weak in adversity.

So often proposing many good things; and bringing so little to effect.

3. Having confessed and bewailed these and other thy defects with sorrow, and great displeasure at thy own weakness, make a strong resolution of always amending thy life, and of advancing for the better.

Then with an entire resignation, and

with thy whole will, offer thyself up to the honour of My Name, on the altar of thy heart, as a perpetual holocaust ; faithfully committing to Me both thy soul and body.

That so thou mayest be worthy to approach to offer up Sacrifice to God, and profitably to receive the Sacrament of My Body.

4. For there is no oblation more worthy, nor satisfaction greater, for the washing away of sins, than to offer thyself purely and entirely to God, together with the Oblation of the Body of Christ, in the Mass and in the Communion.

If a man does what lieth in him, and is truly penitent, as often as he shall approach to Me for pardon and grace, I live, with the Lord, and I will not the death of the sinner, but rather that he be converted and live ; wherefore I will no longer remember his sins, but all shall be forgiven him.

## PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

I. THE first disposition for a worthy Communion, is purity of heart, which consists in detachment from all wilful sin, and from all affection to it. It is in this sense that St. Augustin, speaking to Priests and those who communicate, says that we must come to the altar innocent. You should therefore, before Communion, carefully examine your conscience in detail upon your ordinary faults. See before God, if there be not some considerable sin upon your soul, and if so confess it with sincere sorrow; for in this case it is not sufficient, says the Council of Trent, to make an act of contrition, you must also go to Confession before you approach to the Holy Communion. In this manner it explains those words of St Paul, "*let a man prove himself,*" that so he may be prepared to receive worthily this heavenly bread, and may not eat it to his own condemnation.

II. Be not satisfied with examining whether your conscience reproaches you with any considerable sin; but examine also before God, and detest even the smallest sins which you so easily commit, especially such as are knowingly committed against the inspirations of grace: sins of habit, of attachment, and of indisposition, that is, those which are most consonant with your natural inclinations; the sins which you

have occasioned in others, or in which you participated; hidden sins, &c. Ask pardon of Jesus Christ, before you receive and pray for grace to correct them, and to a yourself for having committed them.

#### PRAYER.

*An Act of Contrition before Communion.*

COME to Thee, O Jesus, as a sick man to his physician, in hopes of obtaining a cure. Thou hast said that those who are afflicted with disease should approach to Him who is able and willing to heal them; wherefore do I desire to approach Thee and to receive Thee frequently, the true Physician and Saviour of my soul, for I have need of Thee to heal my many maladies. To this do I cry with the leper in the Gospel: *if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.*

Inspire me with the same holy confidence which the sick, during Thy lifetime, possessed themselves before Thee. Grant that, like the leper, I may say within myself, *If I shall but touch the hem of His garment*, that is, the appearances under which Thou art concealed, *I shall be healed*. With the like confidence, I will reach and prostrate myself at Thy sacred feet and beg pardon for all the sins of my whole life which I detest from my heart, for the love of Thy name.

*Prayer.* O Jesus, pardon me all that is dis-

pleasing to Thee. Suffer me not to receive Thee unworthily. I truly regret having wounded Thy heart, insulted Thy goodness, provoked Thy anger, resisted Thy grace and the allurements of Thy love. I have offended all Thy divine perfections: forgive and chastise me, and let my punishment be to hate myself, that I may love Thee. To Thee alone do I address my grief; I have grievously offended Thee, and for this will I live and die in the sorrows of repentance. Take from me life, or take away sin, for I can no longer live and offend Thee; I desire to avoid every thing that is displeasing to Thee, or can in any degree remove or separate me from Thee. Amen.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE OBLATION OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS, AND OF  
THE RESIGNATION OF OURSELVES.

*The Voice of the Beloved.*

As I willingly offered Myself to God the Father for thy sins, with My hands stretched out upon the Cross, and My Body naked, so that nothing remained in Me which was not completely turned into

a Sacrifice to appease the Divine wrath; even so oughtest thou willingly to offer thyself to Me daily in the Mass, as intimately as thou canst, with thy whole energies and affections, for a pure and holy oblation.

What more do I require of thee, than that thou endeavour anew to resign thyself to Me?

Whatsoever thou givest except thyself, I regard not; for I seek not thy gift, but thyself.

2.. As it would not suffice thee, if thou hadst all things except Myself, so neither can it please Me, whatever thou givest, unless thou offer Me thyself.

Offer thyself to Me, and give thy whole self for God, and thy offering shall be accepted.

Behold, I offered My whole Self to the Father for thee; I have given My whole Body and Blood for thy Food, that I might be all thine, and thou mightest be *always Mine*.

*But if thou wilt stand upon self, and*

not offer thyself freely to My will, thy offering is not complete, nor will there be an entire union between us.

A spontaneous oblation of thyself into the hands of God ought to precede all thy works, if thou wouldst obtain liberty and grace.

For therefore is it that so few become illuminated and internally free, because they know how entirely to renounce themselves.

My sentence standeth sure: Unless a man renounce all that he possesseth, he cannot be My disciple.

Thou, therefore, if thou desirest to be My disciple, offer up thyself to Me with all thy affections.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

BE not of the number of those who, when they communicate, give themselves entirely to God, and immediately after, return to themselves; whose lives being a constant succession of good desires and frail relapses, are never firmly established either in the fear or love of God. It is of such souls, who are thus mean



nd ungenerous towards a God who is so prodigal of Himself towards them, that the Prophet peaks when he says, *On account of the iniquity of his covetousness, I was angry, and I struck him; I hid my face from thee, and was angry; and he went away wandering, in the way of his own heart.* Isaiah lvii. 17.

## PRAYER.

YES, O Lord, Thou art now the God of my heart, for Thou comest to take possession of it, and to give me Thyself to repose within it. Mayest Thou be such in all things and for ever; mayest Thou alone be the God of my soul in time, that Thou mayest be my portion for eternity. Unite me to Thyself, by making me like to Thee, meek, humble, patient, and charitable. Offer not the union with which I am now honoured, to remain ineffective, like that of a dry branch with the sap of the vine, or languid, like that of a paralyzed arm with a vigorous body; but grant that it may become lively, vivifying and perpetual, like that of food with the body which it cherishes. Amen.

## CHAPTER IX.

THAT WE MUST OFFER OURSELVES, AND ALL THAT IS  
OURS, TO GOD, AND PRAY FOR ALL.

*The Voice of the Disciple.*

LORD, all things are Thine that are in  
heaven and upon earth.

I desire to offer up myself to Thee as  
a voluntary oblation, and to remain for  
ever Thine.

Lord, in the simplicity of my heart, I  
offer myself to Thee this day, as Thy  
servant for evermore, for Thy homage,  
and for a sacrifice of perpetual praise.

Receive me with this sacred Oblation  
of Thy precious Body, which I offer to  
Thee this day in the invisible presence of  
assisting Angels, that it may be for sal-  
vation unto me and all Thy people.

2. Lord, I offer to Thee all my sins  
and offences, which I have committed in  
Thy sight and that of Thy holy Angels,  
from the day in which I was first capable  
of sin until this hour, upon Thy altar of

propitiation; that Thou mayest at the same time burn and consume them all with the fire of thy charity, and mayest blot out all the stains of my sins, and cleanse my conscience from every fault, and restore unto me Thy grace, which by sin I have lost, fully pardoning me all, and mercifully receiving me to the kiss of peace.

3. What can I do for my sins but humbly confess and lament them, and incessantly implore Thy propitiation.

Hear me, I beseech Thee, in Thy mercy, when I stand before Thee, O my God.

All my sins are exceedingly displeasing to me; I will never commit them any more; but I am sorry for them, and will be sorry for them as long as I live; and am prepared to do penance, and to make satisfaction to the utmost of my power.

Forgive, O my God, forgive me my sins, for the sake of Thy holy Name.

Save my soul, which Thou hast *redeemed with Thy precious Blood.*

wickedness.

4. I offer also to Thee my works, though very few and that Thou mayest amend them; that Thou mayest have a favorable regard to them, and be acceptable to Thee, and always tend to better; and mayest direct my conduct, O Thou my God, a slothful and unprofitable creature, to a blissful and glorious end.

5. I offer to Thee also all the desires of devout persons; the desires of my parents, friends, brethren, and all those that are dear to me.

experience the assistance of Thy grace, the help of Thy consolation, protection from dangers, and deliverance from the punishment to come; and that thus freed from all evils, they may joyfully pay to Thee a noble sacrifice of praise.

6. I offer up also to Thee prayers, and this Sacrifice of Propitiation, for them in particular who have in any way injured me, grieved me or abused me, or have inflicted upon me any hurt or injury.

And for all those likewise whom I have at any time grieved, troubled, oppressed, or scandalized, by words or deeds, knowingly or unknowingly; that it may please Thee to forgive us all our sins and mutual offences.

Take, O Lord, from our hearts all suspicion, indignation, anger, and contention, and whatever else may wound charity and lessen brotherly love.

Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy on those that crave Thy mercy; give grace *to the needy*; and grant us so to live, *that we may be worthy to enjoy Thy*

grace, and that we may attain unto life everlasting. Amen.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

WEARY of the servitude of our passions, and fatigued with the inefficacy of our desires, by which we promise God what we never perform, and pretend to be His, without ceasing to be our own or weaning ourselves from the world and vanity, let us now at least, after having received Him, make a firm resolution of giving ourselves really to Him, and of dedicating and consecrating ourselves to His love. It is time, O my Saviour, that this heart, which was made for Thy love, and redeemed by Thy blood, should for ever cease to be devoted to itself, and become wholly and irrevocably Thine; and I protest at Thy sacred feet, that such is my ardent desire. This heart has received Thee, my Jesus, and Thou desirest to consummate within it that new life which Thou hast assumed on the altar, to make it a victim of Thy love. Sacrifice then to Thy Father Thy holy life, together with my life of sin; and never suffer me to recall that heart which on this day I wholly give to Thee.

PRAYER.

I ADORE Thee, O Jesus, with reverence, as my God, with confidence as my Saviour, with

as my Father, and with humble fear as my  
ge. When Thou shalt come to judge me,  
u who hast now come to enter into my soul  
anctify and to save it, condemn me not. I offer  
e the holy Mass which I have heard, and the  
omunion which I have received, to obtain the  
don of all my sins, for the conversion of sin-  
s, and the sanctification of all the just. En-  
ten my understanding, change my heart,  
ulate my life, suppress my passions, and, as  
absolute master, reign Thou entirely over me.  
uld that I could make Thee known and loved  
all the world! I would willingly give my  
to procure for Thee the glory and the delight  
eholding all mankind subjected to Thy em-  
e. Grant, O Jesus, I may seek only to please  
e in all things, and that detached from all  
ga, I may unite myself to Thy love, and thus  
unence in time, what I hope in Thy great  
cy to continue throughout eternity. Amen.

## CHAPTER X.

THAT THE HOLY COMMUNION IS NOT LIGHTLY TO BE  
FORBORN.

*The Voice of the Beloved.*

THOU oughtest often to have recourse to the fountain of grace and of divine mercy, to the fountain of goodness and all purity; that thou mayest be healed of thy passions and vices, and mayest deserve to be made stronger and more vigilant against all the temptations and deceits of the devil.

The enemy, knowing the very great fruit and remedy contained in the Holy Communion, striveth by every method and occasion, as far as he is able, to withdraw and hinder faithful and devout persons from it.

2. For when some are disposed to prepare themselves for the Sacred Communion, they suffer the worst assaults and illusions of Satan.

This wicked spirit himself, as it is written in Job, cometh amongst the sons of



God, to trouble them with his accustomed malice, or to make them over-fearful and perplexed; that so he may diminish their devotion, or by his assault take away their faith, if haply they may altogether forbear Communion, or approach with tepidity.

But not the least regard must be had to his wiles and suggestions, be they ever so shameful and abominable; but all such imaginations are to be turned back upon his own head.

The wretch must be contemned and scorned; nor is Holy Communion to be omitted on account of any assaults and commotions which he may awaken.

3. Oftentimes also a person is hindered by too great a solicitude for having devotion, and a certain anxiety about making confession.

Follow herein the counsel of the wise, and lay aside all anxiety and scruple; for it impedeth the grace of God, and destroyeth the devotion of the mind.

*Abandon not the Holy Communion for*

every trifling perturbation and heaviness; but go quickly to confession, and willingly forgive others all their offences.

And if thou hast offended any one, humbly crave pardon, and God will readily forgive thee.

4. What doth it avail thee to delay for a longer time thy confession, or to put off the Holy Communion?

Purge thyself as soon as possible, spit out the poison quickly, make haste to take the remedy, and thou wilt find it better for thee than if thou hadst deferred it for a longer time.

If to-day thou lettest it alone for this cause, to-morrow, perhaps, some greater will fall out; and so thou mayest a long time be hindered from Communion, and become more unfit.

As quickly as thou canst, shake off present heaviness and sloth; for it is to no purpose to continue long in uneasiness, to pass a long time in inquietness, and for these daily impediments to withdraw thyself from the divine mysteries.

Yea, rather, it is very hurtful to delay Communion long; for this usually bringeth on a heavy slothfulness.

Alas, some tepid and lax persons readily take occasion to delay going to their confession, and desire that their sacred Communion should be therefore deferred, lest they be obliged to give themselves to greater watchfulness.

5. Ah, how little charity and what slender devotion have they who so easily put off holy Communion!

How happy is he, and how acceptable to God, who so liveth, and keepeth his conscience in such purity, as to be prepared and well disposed to communicate every day, were it permitted to him, and he might pass without observation!

If sometimes a person abstaineth out of humility, or from some legitimate preventing cause, he is to be commended for reverence.

*But if sloth creep in upon him, he must bestir himself, and do what lieth in*

him; and the Lord will second his desire according to his good will, which He chiefly regardeth.

6. And when, indeed, he is lawfully hindered, he should yet always have a good will and a pious intention of communicating, and so he will not be without the fruit of the Sacrament.

For every devout person may every day and every hour, without any prohibition, approach to a spiritual communion with Christ with much profit.

And yet on certain days, and at appointed times, he ought to receive sacramentally, with an affectionate reverence, the Body of his Redeemer; and rather aim at the praise and honour of God than seek his own consolation.

For as often as he communicateth mystically and is invisibly refreshed, so often doth he devoutly celebrate the Mystery of Christ's Incarnation and Passion, and is inflamed with His love.

7. But he who prepareth not himself otherwise than when a festival draweth

ar, or when custom compelleth, shall sometimes be unprepared.

Blessed is he who offereth himself up a holocaust to the Lord as often as he celebrateth or communicateth.

Be neither too slow nor too quick in celebrating; but observe the good common medium of those with whom thou rest.

Thou oughtest not to beget weariness and tedium in others; but keep the common way, according to the institution of superiors; and rather accommodate thyself to the utility of others than follow thine own devotion and affection.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

**I** THE ardent desire which Jesus Christ desires to come and take possession of our hearts, that he may reign there as God, should convince us that we afford Him a real pleasure in worthy and frequent Communion; and that, in staying away from the Holy Table, apparently from respect, but in reality from sloth, as is the case with many Christians, we deprive Jesus Christ of the satisfaction He would have in *re-joining with us*, testified in these words, *My*

*delight is to be with the children of men.* To abstain through our own fault from the Holy Communion, is to oppose the designs of His wisdom ; it is to interrupt the connecting links of our predestination, because it is to deprive ourselves of one of the most effectual means of securing the salvation of our souls, a worthy and frequent participation of the Holy Communion, (for these two should never be separated,) and it is to expose ourselves to the danger of losing those graces upon which depends our eternity.

II. Now the most essential dispositions for good and frequent Communion, are, first, a fixed resolution never to commit any wilful sin ; 2dly, to be determined, after confession, to amend our faults and to lead a truly Christian life ; 3dly, to trust and hope that the real presence of Jesus Christ in our souls, and the efficacy of His grace, will preserve us in this twofold resolution. Hence habitual sinners who communicate but seldom, on account of their unworthiness, must renounce their bad habits, and *prove themselves* beforehand, that they may not receive to their own condemnation. Worldly souls who excuse themselves from frequent Communion, under the specious pretext of their attachment to the world, must wean themselves from the vanities, amusements, and engagements of a worldly life,

at they be properly disposed to communicate frequently and worthily: and pious persons who could approach but seldom, for fear of an unworthy Communion, must not absent themselves through false humility, but, as the author says, humble themselves and approach.

## PRAYER.

TRULY, O Lord, I do not deserve to be admitted at Thy Holy Table, as a child in his father's house, because I have rendered myself unworthy of this honour by my sins and infidelities; but as Thou invitest all to come to Thee who labour and are heavy laden with the weight of their miseries, promising to refresh and to comfort them, I will pay more regard to Thy mercy than to my own unworthiness.

Thou sayest in the Gospel, O Jesus, that those who are sick stand in need of a physician; I will therefore frequently approach Thee, for I have great need of the abundance of Thy graces, and of the multitude of Thy mercies, to keep me in Thy love, to preserve me from sin, and to defend me against the enemies of my salvation.

I feel no devotion when I go to Communion; but it is not necessary sensibly to experience any consolations and graces, but only to be faithful to them; and frequent Communion is the means of inspiring me with this fidelity, since the fruit of a good Communion is not always

spiritual sweetness, but strength to conquer ourselves, and fidelity in the discharge of ties.

I am indeed subject to many faults, slothful, and inconstant in Thy service ; but Thou art so able to correct me of my weakness, to alleviate my miseries, as Thou, O Lord, who art the God of mercy and the Bread of life, art strong.

I beseech Thee, therefore, O my most dear Saviour, to grant me the dispositions necessary for frequent and worthy Communion. O my Jesus, come often into my heart, Thy love is the life of my soul, for I desire to live for and by Thee. Amen.

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## CHAPTER XI.

THAT THE BODY OF CHRIST AND THE HOLY COMMUNION ARE MOST NECESSARY TO A SOUL.

### *The Voice of the Disciple.*

O SWEETEST Lord Jesus, how great a blessing is that of a devout soul feasting on Thee in Thy banquet, in which no other meat set before her to



but Thyself, her only Beloved, and most to be desired above all the desires of her heart !

And to me, indeed, it would be delightful, from my inmost affection, to pour out tears in Thy presence, and with loving Magdalen to wash Thy feet with my tears.

But where is this devotion, where is this so plenteous effusion of holy tears ?

Of a truth, in Thy sight, and in that of Thy holy Angels, my whole heart ought to be inflamed and weep for joy.

For I have Thee in the Sacrament truly present, though hidden under another species.

2. For to behold Thee in Thine own real and divine brightness mine eyes could not endure, neither could the whole world subsist in the splendour of the glory of Thy Majesty.

In this, therefore, Thou consultest my weakness, that Thou concealest Thyself *under the Sacrament*.

*I truly possess and adore Him whom*

the Angels adore in heaven; I as yet awhile in faith, but they indeed by sight and without a veil.

I must be content with the light of true faith, and walk therein till the day of eternal brightness break forth, and the shadows of figures shall have passed away.

But when that which is perfect shall come, the use of sacraments shall cease; for the Blessed in heavenly glory need not the sacramental medicine.

For they rejoice without end in the presence of God, beholding face to face His glory; and transformed from brightness to brightness of the abyss of the Deity, they taste the Word of God made flesh, as He was from the beginning, and remaineth for ever.

3. When I call to mind these wonders, every spiritual comfort whatsoever becomes even tedious to me; because as long as I behold not my Lord openly in His glory, I make no account of all that I see and hear in the world.

Thou art my witness, O God, that nothing can comfort me, nor any thing created give me rest, but only Thou, my God, whom I desire to contemplate for eternity.

But this is not possible so long as I burn in this mortal life.

And therefore I must set myself to much patience, and submit myself to Thee in every desire.

For thus also Thy Saints, O Lord, who now exult with Thee in the kingdom of heaven, during life awaited in faith and much patience the advent of Thy glory.

What they believed, I believe; what they hoped, I hope for; and whither they are arrived, I trust that I also, through Thy grace, shall arrive.

In the mean time I will walk in faith, being strengthened by the examples of Thy Saints.

I shall have, moreover, for my consolation and a mirror of life, Thy holy Books, *above all these*, Thy Most Holy Body, *my special remedy and refuge.*

4. For in this life I find there are two things especially necessary for me, without which this miserable life would be to me insupportable.

Whilst detained in the prison of this body, I acknowledge that I need two things, viz., food and light.

Thou hast therefore given to me, weak as I am, Thy Sacred Body for the nourishment of my soul and body, and Thou hast set Thy Word as a light to my feet.

Without these two I could not well live; for the Word of God is the light of my soul, and Thy Sacrament is the bread of life.

These also may be called the two tables set on either side in the storehouse of Thy Holy Church.

One is the table of the Holy Altar, having the holy bread, that is, the precious Body of Christ; the other is that of the Divine Law, containing holy doctrine, teaching a right faith, and leading most securely even to the interior of the veil, where is the Holy of Holies.

5. Thanks be to Thee, O Lord Jesus, Light of eternal Light, for the table of holy doctrine, which thou hast ministered to us Thy servants the Prophets and Apostles, and other teachers.

Thanks be to Thee, O Thou Creator and Redeemer of men, who to manifest to the whole world Thy love, hast prepared a great supper, wherein Thou hast set before us to be eaten, not the typical lamb, but Thy most Sacred Body and Blood, rejoicing all the faithful with Thy holy banquet, and inebriating them with the chalice of salvation, in which are all the delights of paradise; and the holy Angels do feast with us, but with a more happy sweetness.

6. Oh, how great and honourable is the office of Priests, to whom it is given to consecrate with sacred words the Lord of Majesty, to bless Him with their lips, to hold Him with their hands, to receive Him with their own mouths, and to administer Him to others!

*Oh, how clean ought to be the hands,*

how pure the mouth, how holy the body, how immaculate the heart of the Priest, into whom the Author of Purity so often enters !

From the mouth of a Priest nothing but what is holy, no word but what is becoming and profitable, ought to proceed, who so often receiveth the Sacrament of Christ.

7. Simple and chaste should be those eyes which are accustomed to behold the Body of Christ.

Pure and lifted up to heaven should be the hands which are used to handle the Creator of heaven and earth.

Unto Priests especially it is said in the Law, Be ye holy ; for I, the Lord your God, am holy.

8. Let Thy grace, O God omnipotent, assist us, that we who have undertaken the sacerdotal office may be enabled to serve Thee worthily and devoutly, in all purity, and with a good conscience.

And if we cannot live in so great innocency of life as we ought, grant us still

duly to bewail the sins we have committed, and in the spirit of humility, and the purpose of a good will, to serve Thee more fervently for the future.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

*The reading of pious books a means of attaining the dispositions of Communion, and of preserving the fruit thereof in the soul.*

God heretofore gave the Israelites in the desert a pillar of fire to light and to guide them, and manna to support them in their journey to the promised land. In like manner has our Lord given us pious books to enlighten us, and the adorable Sacrament of His Body and Blood to nourish us in our way to heaven. We should therefore make frequent use of both, in order to arrive there; of good books that we may not go astray, and of the Divine Eucharist that we may be strengthened to walk in that narrow path which leads to paradise.

On this account it is proper, on the eve and on the day of Communion, to read some pious book, which treats of the Blessed Sacrament, in order to keep up in the soul that spirit of fervour, fidelity, and love towards God, and that sacred fire which Jesus Christ Himself comes to enkindle within us. That all-divine discourse which Jesus made to His Apostles, after the institution

of the Most Holy Sacrament, may be read; but we should read the Scriptures in those sentiments in which the Holy Spirit composed them; we should read them with that faith, respect, and docility, which they merit, and with which they inspire those who read them frequently and in a proper manner: we should read them with all the attention due to the presence of God, with an ardent desire to profit by them, and to derive nourishment from them, confidently having recourse to the Holy Spirit, who dictated them.

PRAYER.

O MY Saviour! who hast so abundantly provided us with pious books, to serve us as a bright, shining light, to withdraw or to preserve us from those wanderings which are so dangerous to our souls, enlighten our minds with the truths we read, and move our hearts to practise them. Grant that they may be our consolation in trouble, our support in difficulties, and the rule of our whole conduct. But grant also, O Word incarnate, that we may hear Thy voice speaking to our hearts, when we read Thy Gospel with our lips, and that through the respect we owe to Thy Divine Word, we may endeavour to put it in practice on those occasions when we have need of it, since it is not less necessary to practise the holy maxims of the Gospel, than it is to believe them. Amen.



## CHAPTER XII.

HOW GREAT DILIGENCE HE WHO IS TO COMMUNICATE OUGHT TO PREPARE HIMSELF FOR CHRIST.

### *The Voice of the Beloved.*

Be the Lover of purity and the Giver of all sanctity.

Seek a pure heart, and there is the place of My rest.

Make ready for Me a large upper room furnished, and I will eat the Pasch with thee together with My disciples.

If thou wilt have Me to come to thee I will remain with thee, purge out the old leaven, and make clean the habitation of thy heart. Shut out the whole world and all the tumult of vices; sit as a solitary on the house-top; and think of thy excesses in the bitterness of thy soul.

For every lover prepareth a place the most sweet and most beautiful for her dearly loved; since hereby is known the affection of the person entertaining the beloved.

2. Know, nevertheless, that thou canst not satisfy for this preparation by the merit of any action of thine, even shouldst thou prepare thyself thus for a whole year together, so as to think of nothing else.

But it is of My mere goodness and grace that thou art suffered to come to My table; as if a beggar should be invited to the banquet of a rich man, and he had nothing else to return him for his benefits but to humble himself and give him thanks.

Do, therefore, what lieth in thee, and do it diligently; not out of custom nor from necessity, but with fear, reverence, and affection, receive the Body of thy beloved Lord God, who vouchsafeth to come to thee.

I am He who hath invited thee; I have commanded it to be done; I will supply what is wanting to thee; come and receive Me.

3. When I bestow the grace of devotion, give thanks to thy God, not that

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art worthy, but because I have had passion on thee.

thou hast not devotion, but rather st thyself dry, persist in prayer, sigh knock; nor desist until thou deservest to receive some crumb or drop of ing grace.

thou hast need of Me, not I of thee. either dost thou come to sanctify but I come to sanctify and improve

thou comest that thou mayest be sanctified by Me and united to Me; that thou mayest receive new grace, and be incited to amendment.

neglect not this grace, but prepare thyself with all diligence, and bring in thyself to thee thy Beloved.

But thou oughtest not only to prepare thyself for devotion before Communion, but also carefully to keep thyself in after the reception of the Sacrament. Neither is watchfulness less required *after*, than a devout preparation *before*; for strict guardianship afterwards

is the best preparation for again obtaining a greater grace.

For a person is rendered much indisposed for this, if he presently turn himself too eagerly after exterior consolation.

Beware of much talk ; remain in secret, and enjoy thy God ; for thou hast Him whom all the world cannot take from thee.

I am He to whom thou oughtest to give thy whole self ; so that henceforth thou mayest live not in thyself, but in Me, and free from all solicitude.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

*That it is necessary to nourish ourselves with the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.*

As the Blessed Eucharist is a Sacrament in which we find a heaven upon earth, and God Himself in us, as it is the greatest prodigy of God's love for man ; so to profit by it we must endeavour to approach it with a lively faith, a firm hope, and an ardent love of Jesus Christ, trusting that He will supply our deficiency in these three virtues, and increase them within us in proportion as we communicate frequently, and

as far as we are able, worthily. Hence those who would stay away from the Holy Communion because they do not sensibly experience the holy impression of these virtues, nor an ardent desire to receive Jesus Christ, should not on this account deprive themselves of it; because it is necessary to enable them to practise the virtues of Christianity, and the duties of their state of life; they should therefore receive their blessed Saviour on account of the need they have of Him.

The holy Martyrs of the primitive church, before they appeared at the tribunals of their judges, there to confess their faith, were accustomed to receive the Holy Communion; for they did not think themselves, says St. Cyprian, in a fit state without it, or as having sufficient strength to undergo the torments of martyrdom. In like manner should Christians, in order to fight against their passions, and to resist the temptations of the devil, clothe and nourish themselves with the virtue of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ; without which they must be in danger of falling and of being lost.

#### PRAYER.

O JESUS, the Bread of Angels! the divine and necessary nourishment of my soul! what should I be without Thee? How truly might I exclaim *with the Psalmist, I am smitten like grass and my heart is withered because I forget to eat my*

*bread?* Thou hast said in the Gospel that if Thou shouldst suffer the people, who had followed Thee into the desert, to return fasting to their homes, they would faint in the way. This evil would surely befall me, my Saviour, were I not to be nourished with Thy Body and Blood. Weak as I am of myself, and becoming still weaker from the neglect of that divine food which is my strength and my spiritual life, I should soon grow feeble and unequal to contend with my passions.

How, O my Jesus, wilt Thou be the God of my heart, and my portion for eternity, if Thou dost not now take possession of it in the Holy Communion, and commence within it that holy alliance, which Thou desirest to perfect in heaven! Come then, my Saviour, come to me often, that I may never be separated from Thee. Amen.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THAT A DEVOUT SOUL OUGHT TO DESIRE, WITH THE WHOLE HEART, TO BE UNITED TO CHRIST IN THIS SACRAMENT.

*The Voice of the Disciple.*

WHO will give me, O Lord, to find Thee alone, to open my whole heart to Thee,

and to enjoy Thee as my soul desireth, and that no one may henceforth despise me, nor any thing created move or regard me; but that Thou alone mayest speak to me, and I to Thee, as the beloved is wont to speak to his beloved, and a friend to be entertained with a friend.

For this I pray, this I desire, that I may be wholly united to Thee, and that I may withdraw my heart from all things created; and by Holy Communion, and often celebrating, I may more and more learn to relish things heavenly and eternal.

Ah, Lord God, when shall I be wholly united to, and absorbed in Thee, and altogether unmindful of myself?

Thou in me, and I in Thee; and thus grant us both equally to continue in one.

2. Verily, Thou art my Beloved, the choicest among thousands, in whom my soul is well pleased to dwell all the days *of its life*.

*Verily, Thou art my Peace-maker, in*

whom is sovereign peace and true rest;  
and out of whom is labour and sorrow  
and infinite misery.

Thou art in truth a hidden God, and  
Thy counsel is not with the wicked, but  
Thy conversation is with the humble and  
the simple.

Oh, how sweet, O Lord, is Thy Spirit,  
who, to shew Thy sweetness towards Thy  
children, vouchsafest to refresh them with  
that most delicious bread which cometh  
down from heaven !

Truly, no other nation is there so great,  
that hath its gods so nigh to it, as Thou,  
our God, art present to all Thy faithful;  
to whom, for their daily solace, and for  
raising up their hearts to heaven, Thou  
givest Thyself to be eaten and enjoyed.

3. For what other nation is there so  
distinguished as the Christian people?

Or what creature under heaven so be-  
loved as a devout soul, to whom God  
cometh, that He may feed it with his own  
glorious flesh ? O unspeakable grace ! O  
wonderful condescension !



O boundless love, bestowed exclusively on man!

But what shall I render to the Lord for his grace, for charity so remarkable?

There is not any thing that I can present to Him more acceptable than to give up my heart entirely to God, and closely unite it to Him.


Then all that is within me shall rejoice exceedingly, when my soul shall have been perfectly united to its God; then will He say to me, If thou wilt be with Me, I will be with thee: and I will answer Him, Vouchsafe, O Lord, to remain with me; I will willingly be with Thee.

This is my whole desire, that my heart may be united to Thee.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

*If the ends for which Jesus Christ is present upon our altars, and of the pious dispositions with which we should visit the Blessed Sacrament, and assist at Mass and Benediction.*

THE Son of God remains upon our altars not only during Mass, but likewise at other times, that, to hear and favourably to receive our




with indifference, are nighly our  
appearing before their God, th  
their Judge, without either re  
fear; 3dly, to console us und  
support us in difficulties, and to  
sipate our doubts according to  
*Let us go to the Son of Joseph,*  
*sole us ;\** and as a Prophet said  
sent to consult a false God : *Is*  
*no God in Israel ?* 4thly, to be  
during life, and our viaticum  
death.

How should a Christian who  
Jesus Christ in the blessed Sac  
siduity, respect, and gratitude,  
his God, and his Saviour, wl

Christ immolated for him on the altar, repose his confident hope in His bounty and mercies, both in life and in death! Will not, however, the Son of God have reason one day to reproach multitudes of Christians who either neglect to visit Him in the most holy Sacrament, or do so with very little devotion, will he not have reason to reproach them with their irreverence and want of faith, saying to them, *There hath stood one in the midst of you whom ye knew not.* You have neglected to know and to visit God, *who was in the midst of you.* In vain have I performed prodigies of power, wisdom, and bounty in the blessed Eucharist, that I might gain your hearts; you would not interrupt your employments, nor even your pleasures to come and pay Me your homage.

To answer the ends therefore for which Jesus Christ is always present in the most holy Sacrament, we should visit Him, hear Mass, and attend at Benediction, with all the respect and submission of courtiers before their king, with the recollection and fervour of angels before their God, with the humble fear of criminals before their judge, and with the confidence and love of children before their father.



residest upon our altars, to receive  
and dost there annihilate and in  
in honour of Thy Eternal Father  
reign in our hearts. I profound  
the homage due to a God who  
eternal doom. I prostrate myself  
I desire to join in the profound  
Seraphim who assist around Thee  
beseech Thee to accept their  
their love to supply the wandering  
and the indifference of my heart

II. Penetrated with sorrow at  
the irreverence and indecencies  
dared to commit in Thy presence  
also of all other Christians, I mo-  
nition for them and am

the temporal punishment which they have deserved, rather than abandon and punish them for ever.

Grant, O adorable Victim of Thy love and of our salvation, grant that faith may immolate my mind, charity consecrate my heart, and religion sacrifice my whole being to Thee; and that so long as I shall be in Thy house, my eyes may behold only Thee, my heart overflow with Thy love, and my tongue proclaim Thy praise in prayer and supplication.

III. While the angels lie prostrate before Thee, O great God! and, struck with humble fear, fervently pay Thee their tribute of profound respect and ardent love, shall we mortals, who are the works of Thy hands and the price of Thy blood, appear in Thy presence with wandering eyes and dissipated minds, with cold and indifferent hearts, without addressing Thee, and almost without thinking of Thee? O my Saviour, suffer me not to be thus wanting in the respect and love which I owe to Thy greatness, and which Thou dost so much the more deserve as Thou dost the more humble Thyself for the love of me.

IV. Inspire me with the sentiments of the publican, who dared not lift up his eyes towards God, penetrated with sorrow and confusion for *his sins*, and of the prodigal son, when he re-

turned to his father's house; and grant that, them, I may be restored, through Thy blood and my sorrow, to Thy grace and favour:

V. O my soul, behold Thy God who died for thee, and of whose death thou wert the cause, how canst thou refrain from testifying thy love and gratitude towards Him? O my heart, thou before Jesus Christ like the lamp\* burns before Him, and be thou in like manner consumed in His presence. No, I desire not to depart from before Thee, my Saviour, without being truly converted and entirely Thine. A

## CHAPTER XIV.

OF THE ARDENT DESIRE OF SOME DEVOUT PEOPLE  
TOWARDS THE BODY OF CHRIST.

*The Voice of the Disciple.*

OH, how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast bestowed for them that fear Thee!

When I call to mind some persons who have devoted themselves to Thy Sacrament, O Lord,

\* In Catholic countries a lamp is kept continually burning in the churches, before the altar on which the blessed Sacrament is kept.

approach with the greatest devotion and affection, then am I often confounded within myself, and blush that I approach so tepidly and coldly to Thy Altar, and to the Table of Holy Communion ; that I remain so dry and without affection of heart ; that I am not wholly set on fire in Thy presence, O my God, nor so vehemently drawn onwards and affected, as many devout persons have been, who, from excessive desire of Communion and a sensible love in their hearts, were unable to contain themselves from weeping ; but with the mouth, both of their heart as well as of their body, did they from the very marrow of their soul pant after Thee, O God, the Living Fountain ; not being otherwise able either to delay or satisfy their hunger, unless by receiving Thy Body with all joy and spiritual avidity.

2. Oh, truly the ardent faith of these persons is a demonstrative existing argument of Thy sacred presence !

*For they truly know their Lord in the*

breaking of bread, whose heart burneth so mightily within them, from Jesus walking with them.

Alas, far from me too often is such affection and devotion, such vehement love and ardour.

Be Thou merciful to me, O good Jesu, sweet and gracious, and grant Thy poor mendicant to feel, sometimes at least, in the sacred Communion some little of the cordial affection of Thy love, that my faith may be more strengthened, my hope in Thy goodness increased; and that charity, once perfectly enkindled, and having tasted the manna of Heaven, may never die away.

3. Powerful, indeed, is Thy mercy to give me also the desired grace, and in Thy great clemency, when the time of Thy good pleasure arrives, to visit me with the spirit of fervour.

For though I burn not with so great desire as Thy specially devout servants, yet, by Thy grace, I have a desire of this same greatly inflamed desire, praying and



ing that I may be made partaker  
 of all such fervent lovers, and be num-  
 bered in their holy company.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

*How to make a good spiritual Communion.*

SPIRITUAL Communion, which the Council of  
 Trent approves of, and so strongly advises and  
 commends as a substitute for the sacramental  
 and corporeal reception of Jesus Christ, may be  
 made at all times and in all places, whether we  
 are in the presence of the blessed Sacrament or  
 not. We may make it every hour, or after a  
**Sail Mary**, said in honour of the Blessed Virgin,  
 Mother of God, uniting ourselves to those holy  
 dispositions with which she conceived Jesus Christ  
 in her chaste womb. We should bring our minds  
 to a respectful remembrance of Jesus Christ in  
 the most holy Sacrament; we should there adore  
 Him, and direct our hearts towards Him, as  
 Daniel did towards the Temple; we should give  
 all to Him, and desire to receive Him sacrament-  
 ally; as, however, we cannot enjoy that happi-  
 ness, not being prepared, we should pray to Him  
 for the communication of His Holy Spirit, in  
 place of His sacred Body and Blood.

But the most proper time for making a good  
*spiritual Communion*, is when we assist at Mass,  
 at the time of the Priest Communion. Then a

Christian, animated with a lively and actual faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, and with an ardent desire of being intimately united to Him, should evince such dispositions by humbling himself profoundly in His presence; and, esteeming himself unworthy of really receiving Him, implore Him to come and dwell in his mind by faith, and in his heart by love and gratitude for His goodness, that so he may say with the Apostle, *I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.*

#### PRAYER.

O most amiable Saviour! who wast the perpetual object and reigning desire of the ancient Patriarchs and Prophets, and of all the Saints of the Old Testament, who sighed incessantly for Thy incarnation, come into my soul, which burns with the desire of receiving Thee, and of being united to Thee, as the Author of my salvation and the Source of all good. Come and destroy within me the tyranny of sin and self-love, and establish there the reign of Thy grace and charity. I have reason to judge myself unworthy of really partaking of Thy Body and Blood, but in Thy mercy grant me to partake of Thy spirit, and of Thy virtues, through the desire I have of receiving Thee in the most holy Sacrament.

No, my Jesus, I cannot leave Thee, nor live without Thee; Thou only canst satisfy my heart

and make me happy. O ye Seraphim! who ardently desire to be sacramentally united to Jesus Christ, yet can not I unite myself to the ardour and purity of your desires, to be united to the same God whom with me you adore upon the altar. But, O Lord, do Thou come and purify my heart from all attachment to myself or to creatures, my heart which was made but to love and to possess Thee. Thou only canst satisfy it, and all that is not Thee is as nothing. O amiable God! O loving God! can I know Thee and not love Thee, and love Thee and not burn with desire to receive Thee on earth, and to see and to possess Thee for ever in heaven. Amen.

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## CHAPTER XV.

THAT THE GRACE OF DEVOTION IS ACQUIRED BY  
HUMILITY AND SELF-ABNEGATION.

*The Voice of the Beloved.*

THOU oughtest to seek the grace of devotion earnestly, to ask it longingly, to wait for it patiently and confidently, to receive it *thankfully*, to keep it humbly, to work *with it diligently*, and to commit to God

the time and manner of this heavenly visitation, until He come unto thee.

Thou oughtest especially to humble thyself when thou feelest inwardly little or no devotion; and yet not to be too much dejected, nor to grieve inordinately.

God often giveth in one short moment what He hath for a long time denied.

He giveth sometimes in the end that which at the beginning of prayer He deferred to grant.

2. If grace were always immediately given, and ever present at our will, it would scarcely be supportable to weak man.

Therefore the grace of devotion must be awaited with a good hope and humble patience.

Still impute it to thyself and to thy sins when it is not given, or when also it is secretly taken away.

A trifling matter is it sometimes that hindereth or hideth grace; if, indeed, that may be called trifling, and not rather important, which hindereth so great a good.

But if thou wilt remove this thing, small or great as it may be, and perfectly overcome it, it shall be as thou seekest.

3. For as soon as thou hast delivered thyself up to God with thy whole heart, and neither seekest this nor that for thine own pleasure or will, but wholly placest thyself in Him, thou shalt find thyself united to Him and at peace; for nothing will be so grateful to thee, and please thee so much, as the good pleasure of the Divine will.

Whosoever, therefore, with simplicity of heart shall raise up his intention to God, and disengage himself from all inordinate love or dislike of any created being, he shall be the most apt to receive grace, and worthy of the gift of devotion.

For the Lord bestoweth His benediction there where He findeth vessels empty.

And the more perfectly one forsaketh the things below, and the more he dieth *to self* by contempt of himself, the more *speedily* grace cometh, entereth in more

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## THE FOLLOWING OF CHRIST.

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entifully, and the higher it elevateth a part that is free.

4. Then shall he see and abound, and shall admire, and his heart shall be enlarged within him, because the hand of the Lord is with him, and he hath put himself wholly into His hand, even for ever.

Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who seeketh God with his whole heart, and taketh not his soul in vain.

Such a one, in receiving the Holy Eucharist, obtaineth the great grace of Divine union; because he doth not regard his own devotion and consolation, but above all devotion and consolation he regardeth the honour and glory of God.

### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

*How we are to dispose ourselves to receive the grace of the Holy Communion, that we may profit by it.*

THE end of the Holy Eucharist is to unite us intimately to Jesus Christ, and to form in our souls a moral incarnation of His spirit and His virtues; hence the holy Fathers call this adorable Sacrament an extension of the incarnation;

it is to perpetuate the reign of His grace and love within us, and to enable us always to live a divine and supernatural life in and by Him. Thus the grace which the Holy Communion produces in us, is conformable to the end for which it was instituted; and is agreeable to what Jesus Christ says of it in the Gospel; for, first, it causes us to remain in Him, forming and imprinting in our souls the character of His virtues, as a seal makes its impression upon the wax to which it is applied; 2dly, it makes us live by Him and for Him, that is, act only to please Him and by the influence of His love; 3dly, it enables us to live always a life of grace. Thus the grace which Jesus Christ communicates to us in the Holy Communion, is to establish Himself in us, to make us act in all things and live only in Him and for Him, and to give us eternal life. We should dispose ourselves to receive and profit by this grace and these three effects of a good Communion; first, by separating ourselves from all wilful sin, and the affection for it; 2dly, by renouncing and dying incessantly to ourselves; 3dly, by being ever faithful to the grace of God, and in the exercise of His love.

#### PRAYER.

I. WHAT confusion for me, O Jesus, to have communicated so often, and to have profited so

little by my Communion, to have been so frequently nourished with God, and to have lived always as man, an idle and sensual life! Pardon, my Saviour, pardon me the evil dispositions with which I have approached the Holy Communion, pardon me for having had so often a dissipated mind, a heart attached to self-love, and to the world, and for having done so little to acquire the dispositions for a good Communion, to return Thee thanks after having received it and to reap the fruit of it, which is the re-establishment of myself in fidelity and fervour.

II. How much reason have I to fear, O my Saviour, that Thou wilt one day reproach me with the unfruitfulness of my Communion! But ought I less to dread Thy just reproach for neglecting to dispose myself for frequent and worthy Communion? How I fear lest I shall be condemned for my sloth, which has kept me away from the Holy Table, and caused me to lose so many Communion to which Thou wouldst have attached the grace of my conversion!

III. I will therefore from henceforth dispose myself for worthy Communion by detachment from sin and the occasions of it, and by interior acts of those virtues which I ought to exercise before, during, and after the Holy Communion, and I will also spare no pains to profit by my Communion, by endeavouring to watch over



myself, to avoid all wilful faults, to do all with a view to please Thee, to be faithful in my religious exercises, and to be courageous in restraining and conquering myself; for these are the true fruits of a good Communion. Grant me grace to execute what now, by Thy grace, Thou dost inspire me to resolve. Amen.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT WE OUGHT TO LAY OPEN OUR NECESSITIES TO CHRIST, AND CRAVE HIS GRACE.

### *The Voice of the Disciple.*

O MOST sweet and most loving Lord, whom I now desire with all devotion to receive, Thou knowest my infirmity and the necessity which I endure; under how great evils and vices I lie prostrate; how often I am oppressed, tempted, troubled, and defiled.

To Thee do I come for remedy, to Thee do I pray for consolation and relief; I speak to Him who knoweth all things, to whom my whole interior is manifest, and

who alone can perfectly console and assist me.

Thou knowest what good things I stand most in need of, and how poor I am in virtues.

2. Behold, I stand before Thee poor and naked, begging grace and imploring mercy.

Feed Thy hungry beggar, inflame my coldness with the fire of Thy love, enlighten my blindness with the brightness of Thy Presence.

Turn for me all earthly things into bitterness, all things grievous and adverse into patience, and all low and created things into contempt and oblivion.

Raise up my heart to Thee into heaven, and suffer me not to wander upon earth.

Mayest Thou alone be delightful to me henceforth and for evermore.

For Thou only art my meat and drink, my love and my joy, my sweetness and my whole good.

3. Oh, that with Thy Presence Thou wouldst totally inflame, consume, and

transform me into Thyself, that I may be made one spirit with Thee by the grace of internal union, and by the melting of ardent love!

Suffer me not to go from Thee hungry and dry; but deal with me in Thy mercy, as Thou hast often dealt so wonderfully with Thy Saints.

What marvel if I should be wholly set on fire by Thee, and should die to myself, since Thou art a fire always burning and never failing, a love purifying hearts and enlightening the understanding!

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

*For this and the next chapter.*

I. THE Son of God, after having taught us by His Word, shewn us by His example, and merited for us, by His grace, the necessary and essential virtues for Christian salvation, would institute the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist, to come Himself and imprint them in our hearts. Of these Christian virtues, humility is the first, of which He gives us a splendid example in the most holy Sacrament; for He is there *concealed, annihilated, and unknown to sense.* During His mortal life, the perfections of His

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divinity only were concealed, and as it were annihilated in His humanity; but in the blessed Sacrament His humanity also lies hid, and nothing appears of a Man-God but what is seen by the eyes of faith. Here we learn how we ought to live in this world, in imitation of the humility and annihilation of Jesus Christ in the most holy Sacrament; first, to love a concealed and abject life; 2dly, to fly from praise, esteem, and honour, and to welcome contempt as due to such sinners as ourselves; 3dly, to endeavour to be good and virtuous without wishing to display our virtue or to perform our actions for the sake of being seen and esteemed by men, but solely to please God; 4thly, to be persuaded that man cannot honour God in any way so effectually as by abasing and humbling himself before Him; 5thly, to yield to hasty persons for the sake of peace; 6thly, never to act from human respect, but from a reverential fear of God; 7thly, never to speak well of ourselves, nor ill of others.

II. The Son of God gives us in the Holy Eucharist an example of perfect obedience and of patience equal to all the outrages which He there receives, by the exact, continual, and miraculous obedience which He pays to the Priest, immediately descending upon the altar when the words of consecration are pronounced, and remaining there until man receives Him into his breast! O

great God of independence and sovereignty ! what a subject of confusion for us, that although Thou art God, Thou dost nevertheless obey man without delay, while man refuses or defers to obey Thee.

I will henceforth, O my Saviour, in honour and imitation of Thy perfect obedience in the most holy Sacrament, promptly, generously, and constantly obey whatever Thou shalt ordain by Thy inspirations, by my superiors, and by the knowledge of my duties.

III. Jesus Christ teaches and inspires us with patience by his practice of it in the Holy Eucharist, in which He is an object of contempt to some, of neglect to others, and of indifference to many, who are but little devoted to God, much to the world, and wholly to themselves ; in which He beholds Himself exposed to the unworthy or fruitless Communions of so many, whose lives are either decidedly criminal from being spent in the habit and occasion of mortal sin, or, at least, are of no avail to salvation. Nevertheless He suffers all these outrages with invincible patience, and He suffers them thus, to teach and to induce us to suffer contradictions and injuries in like manner.

IV. O my Jesus, the Victim of our salvation and of our sins ! why should we daily renew by our irreverence, dissipation, and indevotion, those outrages Thou didst receive when dying on the

Group, and renew them even in that state in which Thou art pleased to continue that all-atoning sacrifice. Pardon, O Jesus, pardon the insensibility, coldness, and ind devotion with which we have approached the Holy Communion; forgive us for not having always followed the injunction which Thou givest us in the Gospel, of being reconciled to all mankind, before we present ourselves at the foot of Thy altar. Pardon also our impatience and the sallies of passion, which our Communion have not corrected in us, because we have not profited by them! Suffer not our tongues, which become the resting-places of Thy sacred Body, and which are so often purpled with Thy Blood, to be employed as the instruments of our anger and malediction. O Lord, who, during Thy mortal life, didst heal the most incurable diseases, arrest, I beseech Thee, the impetuosity of my tongue. Yes, my Saviour, that I may reap advantage from my Communion, I will never speak when my heart is moved, but sacrifice my utterance to Thee, who, for my sake, didst sacrifice even the last drop of Thy sacred Blood.

#### PRAYER.

*To attain the fruit of a good Communion.*

GIVE, O Jesus, to all who approach Thee in the Holy Communion, a constant courage to conquer themselves, an exact fidelity in correspond-

ng with Thy graces, a restraint upon their tongue, a recollection of mind, and the plenitude of Thy love in their hearts. For Thy honour and glory, O divine Saviour, subject us to Thy dominion, and immolate us to Thy greatness. Suffer not our hearts, which are the conquest of Thy grace, ever more to be separated from Thee.

Be Thou the ruler of our passions, and the God of our souls; and grant that when we communicate, and after Communion, we may establish within us the reign of Thy sovereignty by our submission, the reign of Thy bounty by our confidence, and the reign of Thy grace by our fidelity.  
Amen.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

OF AN ARDENT LOVE AND VEHEMENT DESIRE TO  
RECEIVE CHRIST.

*The Voice of the Disciple.*

WITH great devotion and ardent love, with all affection and fervour of heart, I desire to receive Thee, O Lord, as many saints and devout persons, who were most pleasing to Thee in holiness of life

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and in the most burning devotion, have desired Thee when they communicated.

O my God, Eternal Love, my whole good and never-ending happiness, I desire to receive Thee with the most vehement desire and most worthy reverence that any of the Saints have ever had, or could experience.

2. And although I am unworthy to possess all those sentiments of devotion, nevertheless I offer Thee the whole affection of my heart, as though I alone had all those highly-pleasing and inflamed desires.

Yet whatever a pious mind can conceive and desire, all these with the greatest reverence and most inward fervour I present and offer Thee.

I desire to reserve nothing for myself, but freely and most willingly to immolate to Thee myself and all that is mine.

O Lord my God, my Creator and Redeemer, I desire to receive Thee this day with such affection, reverence, praise, and honour, with such gratitude, worthiness.



and love, with such faith, hope, and purity, as Thy most holy Mother, the glorious Virgin Mary, received and desired Thee, when to the Angel announcing to her the Mystery of the Incarnation she humbly and devoutly answered, Behold the hand-maid of the Lord ; be it done unto me according to thy word.

3. And as Thy blessed precursor, the most excellent among the Saints, John the Baptist, in Thy presence rejoicing, leapt through joy of the Holy Ghost whilst he was yet enclosed in his mother's womb ; and afterwards seeing Jesus walking among men, humbling himself exceedingly, with devout affection, said, The friend of the Bridegroom, who standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth with joy for the voice of the Bridegroom ; so I also wish to be inflamed with great and holy desires, and to present myself to Thee from my whole heart.

Wherefore I here offer and present to *Thee the joys of all devout hearts, their ardent affections, their ecstasies*

supernatural illuminations, and heavenly visions; together with all the virtues and praises that are or shall be celebrated by all creatures in heaven and earth, for myself and all such as have been recommended to my prayers; that thus by all Thou mayest be worthily praised and glorified for ever.

4. Receive my vows, O Lord my God, and my desires of infinite praise and boundless blessing, which, according to the multitude of Thy unspeakable greatness, are most justly due to Thee.

These I render, and desire to render Thee every day and every moment of time; and I invite and entreat all the Heavenly Spirits, and all the Faithful, by prayers and affections, to render with me thanksgiving and praise.

5. Let all peoples, tribes, and tongues praise Thee, and magnify Thy holy and most sweet Name, with the highest jubilation and ardent devotion.

And may all, whoever reverently and devoutly celebrate Thy most high Sacra-

ment, and receive it with full faith, at Thy hands deserve to find grace and mercy, and humbly to pray for me, a sinner.

And when they shall have obtained their wished-for devotion and blissful union, and shall retire from Thy sacred heavenly table fully comforted and wonderfully refreshed, let them vouchsafe to remember poor me.

Practical Reflections and Prayer as in the preceding chapter.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

THAT A MAN SHOULD NOT BE A CURIOUS SEARCHER INTO THIS SACRAMENT, BUT A HUMBLE FOLLOWER OF CHRIST, SUBMITTING HIS SENSE TO HOLY FAITH.

*The Voice of the Beloved.*

THOU must beware of curious and useless scrutiny into this most profound Sacrament, if thou wouldst not sink into the *depth of doubt*.

.. He that is a searcher of majesty shall be overwhelmed by glory.

.. God is able to effect more than man is able to understand.

.. A pious and humble inquiry after truth is permitted, as it is always prepared to be instructed; and studieth to walk in the sound doctrine of the Fathers.

2. Blessed is that simplicity which leaveth the difficult paths of questionings, and goeth on in the plain and sure path of God's commandments.

Many have lost devotion, whilst they would search into lofty matters.

It is faith and an upright life that are required of thee; not the loftiness of intellect, nor diving deep into the Mysteries of God.

If thou dost neither understand nor comprehend those things which are beneath thee, how mayest thou comprehend such as are above thee?

Submit thyself to God, and humble thy sense to faith, and the light of knowledge shall be given thee, according as

shall be advantageous and necessary for thee.

3. Some are grievously tempted concerning faith and the Sacrament; but this is not to be imputed to them, but rather to the enemy.

Be not thou anxious, nor stop to dispute with thy thoughts, nor answer doubts which the Devil suggests; but believe the words of God, believe His Saints and Prophets, and the wicked enemy will fly from thee.

It is often very profitable that the servant of God should suffer such things.

For the devil tempteth not unbelievers and sinners, whom he already securely possesseth; but the faithful and devout he tempteth and molesteth in many ways.

4. Go forward, therefore, with a simple and undoubting faith, and with lowly reverence approach the Sacrament; and whatsoever thou art not able to understand, securely commit to God the *omnipotent*.

God doth not deceive thee; but he is deceived who trusteth too much to himself.

God walketh with the simple, revealeth Himself to the humble, and giveth understanding to little ones; He discloseth His meaning to pure minds, and hideth His grace from the curious and proud.

Human reason is weak, and may be deceived; but true faith cannot be deceived.

5. All reason and natural investigation ought to follow faith, and not precede or infringe upon it.

For faith and love are here most especially predominant, and operate by occult ways in this most holy and super-excelling Sacrament.

God, the eternal and immense, and of power infinite, doth things great and inscrutable in heaven and in earth; and there is no searching out His wonderful works.

If the works of God were such that they could easily be comprehended by human

reason, they could neither be called wonderful nor unspeakable.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

*Faith must triumph over our senses and reason, by our firmly believing in the Real Presence, and humbly receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus in the most holy Sacrament of the altar.*

I. TAKING it for granted that God can do more than man can comprehend; that human reason may be deceived, but that faith cannot; and that we are bound to believe Jesus Christ when He says to His Apostles, *This is My body, which shall be delivered for you: this is My blood which shall be shed for you*, we must necessarily believe without hesitation the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the most holy Sacrament, without wishing to fathom the depth of this mystery, which is wholly incomprehensible to reason and impenetrable to human understanding, our faith supplying the defects of our senses; and contenting ourselves with thinking that as God was able to accomplish it, and has declared to us that He has done so, we must endeavour only to believe, honour, and receive Jesus Christ in the adorable Eucharist.

II. *What a happiness, thus to sacrifice in this Mystery of faith, as indeed in all other mysteries,*

the light of human reason to the truth of God's word, and the affection of our hearts to the infinite love evinced by our Redeemer in the institution and use of the most holy Sacrament, in which, as St. Bernard says, He is all love for us; in which, according to the Council of Trent, He replenishes our hearts with all the riches of His love; but of a love infinitely liberal, which induces Him to give Himself entirely to us, and to be even prodigal of Himself: for it is, says the sacred text, in this Sacrament which He instituted at the close of His life, that He gives us the most tender and sensible marks of His love for us, by uniting Himself intimately to us, and us intimately to Himself, to take possession from henceforth of our hearts, and to give us a pledge of possessing Him for all eternity.

III. Such being the admirable designs of Jesus Christ in the most holy Sacrament, it is for us to endeavour to correspond with them by a worthy and frequent use of it. A sincere and reverential faith, a Christian life of detachment from the world, a profound humility, a simple docility of belief, and an effectual obedience in refusing nothing required of us by Jesus Christ, when He descends into our souls in the Holy Eucharist, a dedication of our whole selves to the honour of His annihilated greatness, and in gratitude for the ardour of His love, is the whole He requires




of us, and all we have to do to dispose ourselves in a proper manner to receive and to profit by his holy Sacrament. But let us always remember that He does not demand from us as a disposition for Communion, that which is the effect of Communion, and that, provided we approach Him with a real desire of being converted, convinced by a good confession, and by a firm hope that Jesus Christ will confirm us by His Presence in His grace and love, we may with confidence frequently receive the Holy Communion, that we may obtain courage to conquer ourselves, fidelity in our exercises of piety, and perseverance in the grace and love of God, which are the real effects of frequent and worthy Communion.

PRAYER.

*To Jesus Christ, that He may in His bounty enable us to practise this book.*

ALLOW me, O my Saviour ! to offer Thee, with the most profound reverence, these helps to the practice of this book of Thy imitation, which Thou hast inspired me to add to it, to teach and induce all Christians to apply themselves to know Thee, to love Thee, and to follow Thee, to unite themselves to the holy dispositions of Thy heart in all Thy Mysteries, to practise the maxims of Thy Gospel, and to imitate Thy virtues: *for it is in this, as Thou tellest us, that consist*



Son," and procure for us, by T  
tercession, a good life, a holy des  
eternity. Amen.

# PASSAGES

IN

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SUITABLE TO THE DIFFERENT STATES OF LIFE AND SPIRITUAL NECESSITIES OF THE FAITHFUL.

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### *For those who live in Seminaries.*

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*For the disobedient.*

Book I. Chap. 9.

III. " 13, 32.

*For those who are given to much talking.*

Book I. Chap. 10.

III. " 24, 44, 45.

*For those who busy themselves about the faults of others and neglect their own.*

Book I. Chap. 11, 14, 16.

II. " 5.

*For those whose devotion is false or badly directed.*

Book III. Chap. 4, 6, 7.

*To direct the intention.*

Book III. Chap. 9. .

*For those who are too susceptible.*

Book III. Chap. 44.

*For those who are too much attached to the delights of human friendship.*

Book I. Chap. 8, 10.

II. " 7, 8.

III. " 32, 42, 45.

*For those who take offence at the simplicity or the obscurity of the Holy Scriptures.*

Book I. Chap. 5.

*For those who are inclined to jealousy.*

Book III. Chap. 22, 41.

# PRAVERS

FROM

## The Following of Christ.

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*Before spiritual reading.*

Book III. Chap. 2.

*To obtain the grace of devotion.*

Book III. Chap. 3. Par. 6 and 7.

*For the help of divine consolation.*

Book III. Chap. 5. Par. 1 and 2.

(Before or after Communion.)

*To obtain an increase of the love of God.*

Book III. Chap. 5. Par. 6.

*Acts of abasement in the presence of God.*

Book III. Chap. 8.

(Before Communion.)

*For one who lives in retirement and piety.*

Book III. Chap. 10.



*Acts of profound humility.*

Book III. Chap. 14.

(Before or after Communion.)

*For resignation to the will of God.*Book III. Chap. 15. Par. 1, verses 3 and 4. Par.  
2, verse 3 to the end.*Acts of resignation.*

Book III. Chap. 16 to the end.

" " 17. Par. 2 and 4.

" " 18. Par. 2.

*For patience.*

Book III. Chap. 19. Par. 5.

*For one in affliction or temptation.*

Book III. Chap. 20, 21. Par. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

(The same prayer for those who experience the love of  
God.)

(Before or after Communion.)

*An act of thanksgiving.*

Book III. Chap. 21. Par. 7.

(After Communion.)

*For those who think they have received less from  
God than others, either for body or for soul.*

Book III. Chap. 22.

*Purity of mind and detachment from creatures.*

Book III. Chap. 23. Par. 5 to the end.

*For one who is beginning his conversion.*

Book III. Chap. 26.

(The same for one who is desirous of advancing in virtue.)

*To obtain the spirit of strength and wisdom.*

Book III. Chap. 27. Par. 4 and 5.

*For a person in great affliction.*

Book III. Chap. 29.

*Prayer after Communion.*

Book III. Chap. 34.

(The same, to excite one's self to the love of God.)

*Acts of resignation and reliance on Divine Providence.*

Book III. Chap. 39. Par. 2.

*An act of humility.*

Book III. Chap. 40.

(Before or after Communion.)

*When we receive any grace from God.*

Book III. Chap. 40.

*An act of resignation.*

Book III. Chap. 41. Par. 2.

*Pious sentiments.*

Book III. Chap. 44. Par. 2.

*When attacked with calumny.*

Book III. Chap. 46. Par. 5.

*Prayer on the happiness of heaven.*

(Which may be said particularly on the feasts of Easter,  
∞ the Ascension, and All Saints.)

Book III. Chap. 48.

(Before or after Communion.)

*Acts of humility and contrition.*

Book III. Chap. 52.

(Before Communion.)

*To obtain grace.*

Book III. Chap. 55.

*For Priests and religious, to obtain perseverance  
in their vocations.*

Book III. Chap. 56. Par. 3, 5, 6.

*An act of confidence in God.*

Book III. Chap. 57. Par. 4.

*For all Christians who aspire to piety.*

Book III. Chap. 59.

(After Communion, or at the conclusion of a retreat.)

*In the presence of the blessed Sacrament*

Book IV. Chap. 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 11 (to par. 6), 13, 14,  
16, 17, and part of the prayers above.

*The dignity of Priests, and the sanctity of their  
ministry.*

Book IV. Chap. 5.

*For Priests and those in Seminaries.*

Book IV. Chap. 11 Par. 2, 7 and 8.

# Devotions for the Holy Communion.

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## A RETREAT OF THREE DAYS.

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### First Day.

#### MORNING.

Book III. Chap. 53. Spirit of retirement.

#### NOON.

I. " 20. Spirit of retirement.

#### EVENING.

I. " 21. Spirit of retirement.

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### Second Day.

#### MORNING.

Book I. Chap. 22. Miseries of man.

I. " 23. Death.

#### NOON.

I. " 24. Judgment and Hell.

III. " 14. Judgment and Hell.

## EVENING.

Book III. Chap. 48. Heaven.

• III. " 59. Conclusion.

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**Third Day.**

## MORNING.

*Preparation and exercise of humility.*

Book IV. Chap. 6. Prayer to obtain the grace of approaching the Sacraments worthily.

Book IV. Chap. 7. Examination of conscience, contrition, resolution of amendment, confession, and satisfaction.

(Read also on your knees the 8th Chapter of Book III.)

## NOON.

Book IV. Chap. 18. Faith obedient to the mystery of the Eucharist.

Book IV. Chap. 10. Advantages of frequent communion.

(Omit the second part of Par. 7, to the end.—Read on your knees the 52d Chapter of Book III.)

## EVENING.

Book IV. Chap. 12. Preparation for the Holy Communion.

Book IV. Chap. 15. Devotion founded on humility and self-renunciation.

Book IV. Chap. 9. Offering of one's self to God in the Holy Communion.

(Read on your knees the 40th Chapter of Book III.)

**For the Day of Communion.**

**MORNING.**

Book IV. Chap. 1, 2, 3, 4.

*Before and during Mass.*

Book IV. Chap. 9, 16, 17.

*After Mass.*

Book IV. Chap. 11, 13, 14.

(Omit Par. 6, 7, and 8.)

*During the day and evening.*

Book III. Chap. 21, 34, 48.

(Repeat the 9th Chapter of Book IV., and choose one of the prayers before set down, Book IV. Chap. 6, and following.)

*After Holy Communion.*

Return thanks to Jesus Christ, and excite yourself to His love.

Book III. Chap. 5, 7, 8, 10.

Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ speaking to the soul after it has received Him.

Book II. Chap. 1. Book III. Chap. 1, 2, 3.

Detach the soul from creatures.

Book III. Chap. 26, 31, 42, 45.

Renounce thyself, and give thyself entirely to God.

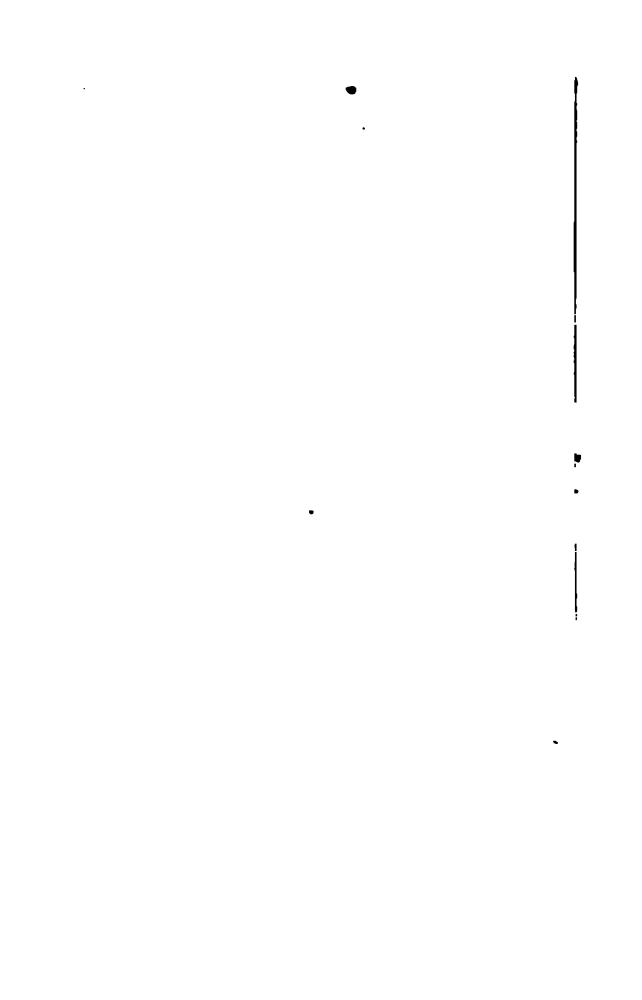
Book III. Chap. 15, 17, 27, 37.

Suffer with patience, and in union with the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

Book II. Chap. 12. Book III. Chap. 16, 18, 19.















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